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ABSTRACT

In June 2001, the International Institute for Educational Planning convened a policy forum on the organization, functioning, and effectiveness of national ministries of education. This book presents eight key papers from that forum. The forum discussed how differences in organizational structures and mechanisms affect adjustability and effectiveness of educational policies and their implementation process. The forum also attempted to compare and draw lessons from a selected number of experiences in which the absence or presence of sound political leadership and adequate links with stakeholders at all levels of the system have played a major role in the success or failure of educational reform. The discussions, and the papers in the book, were arranged around four major points: (1) steering from above: the link between political leadership and administration; (2) steering from below: the ministry's interaction with the operational level (schools, teachers, students, etc.); (3) steering from outside: the relationship between the ministry and the main stakeholders outside the system (teachers' unions, parents' associations, mass media, etc.); and (4) steering from within: the ministry's internal organizational structures and regulating mechanisms. (Author/WFA)

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Policy Forum No. 13

Organization of ministries of education

IIEP, Paris, 20-21 June 2001

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UNESCO

International Institute for Educational Planning

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Organization of ministries of education

IIEP, Paris, 20-21 June 2001

Gudmund Hernes,
in collaboration with Gabriele Göttelmann-Duret and Estelle Zadra

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International Institute for Educational Planning

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CONACEF	National Confederation of Private Schools (Chile)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DANIDA	Danish Agency for Development Assistance
DFID	Department for International Development
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
ESCC	Education Sector Consultative Committee
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross enrolment ratio
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
ILO	International Labour Organization
JICA	Japanese International Co-operation Agency
MINEDAF	Ministers of Education of African Member States
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PASE	*Programme d'ajustement du Secteur de l'éducation*
PTA	Parent/Teacher Association

P-900	Compensatory basic education programme (Chile)
RR&Ps	Rules Regulations and Procedures
SADC	Southern African Development Co-operation
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SIMCE	System for the Measurement of Educational Quality (Chile)
SNED	System of Merit-Awards to Schools (Chile)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWW	World Wide Web

INTRODUCTION.
ISSUES AND CONTRIBUTIONS:
A BRIEF OVERVIEW

1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY FORUM

The organization of ministries of education varies from country-to-country and often even within the same country over time. In some cases, ministries of education cover all levels and sub-sectors of education and training, while in others three or more ministries are concerned. In certain instances, separate units are set up – within or outside of the ministry – for strategic planning and/or educational reform, in others such organizational differentiation has never been tried out. While decentralization is gaining ground in many countries, administrative structures remain centralized in others. *Consultation of the main stakeholder groups* in education is well established in some instances, but not in others.

Does the particular organization of ministries of education actually make any difference with respect to their functioning and effectiveness? In particular: *Are there organizational structures, or mechanisms, more 'appropriate' than others for promoting both efficient management of education and policies that are 'responsive' to the environment and sustainable?* How much and what kind of 'steering from above', 'from below' 'from within' and 'from outside' should the organization of ministries of education allow in this perspective?

In both developing and developed countries, these questions are undoubtedly of interest to policy-makers who are facing increasing pressures to respond quickly, but also in a 'democratic' and an effective manner (in a medium- and long-term perspective) to the changing challenges of education policy development.

The major aim of the Policy Forum on 'The organization of ministries of education', organized in Paris by the IIEP on 20-21 June

2001, was to discuss how *'the differences in organizational structures and mechanisms affect the adjustability and effectiveness of educational policies'*. In particular, the Forum attempted to compare and draw lessons from a few selected national experiences where effective organization and leadership of the ministry have played a major role in the success of educational reform policies.

During the two-day Policy Forum, the presentations and discussions were articulated around four 'points of entry' into the central theme of the meeting:

- 'Steering from above': the links between *policy/political leadership and administration*
- 'Steering from below': the ministry's interaction with the *operational level,* i.e. with schools, teachers, students, etc.
- 'Steering from outside': the relationship between the ministry of education and the main stakeholders *outside* the education system, i.e. teacher unions, parents' associations, the mass media, etc.
- 'Steering from within': the ministry's *internal organizational structures* and *regulating mechanisms*.

Each of these *four major issues* was introduced through presentation of key papers based on one, or several, significant country experiences. The debates were further enriched by 'discussants' drawn from top-level decision-makers and officials in ministries as well as international experts in the field. The purpose of the ensuing discussions was to share experiences and exchange views concerning the main current challenges of the organization of ministries of education.

A certain number of key problems are obviously common to ministries of education in both industrialized and developing

countries, irrespective of specific institutional settings. It was possible, therefore, to establish *'common grounds of concern'* among participants from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. The Forum also helped establish new or reinforced links between education ministries in different development contexts.

2. MAIN ISSUES AND PAPERS PRESENTED

Political leadership and administration: steering from above?

What type of relationship should be established between the political leaders and the administration of ministries of education? Since the latter tend to be more open to their environment, and more complex in their functioning, one may question whether it is sufficient for ministers of education to have political legitimacy or support, and a hierarchically organized administration to ensure the 'steering from above' of the educational policy making and implementation processes.

The query then is: *Under what conditions do ministers have a strong influence on these processes?* What are the critical factors – either within the administrative machinery (e.g. the political platform of the party in power, the horizontal and vertical structures of the ministry, the minister's own professional knowledge, experience and managerial skills; knowledge and status of his officials, etc.) or outside the educational administration (e.g. public opinion, political alliances, etc.)?

In many contexts, however, the main challenge is rather to limit *'top-down'* political interference in administrative processes and to ensure a desirable degree of continuity and sustainability of educational policy in spite of frequent changes of political leadership. What are the regulations (e.g. concerning the recruitment of the administrative elite) and incentives that can help attain this?

The papers presented by Aîcha Bah Diallo entitled 'Finding the right balance' and Allan Taylor entitled 'Governance and management of education in post-apartheid South Africa' provide stimulating reflections on this issue. Growing consultation of administrators by

political decision-makers in ministries of education – instead of simple 'top-down' decision-making – is a common feature in both country cases presented. In South Africa, 'co-operative governance and management' appears as an institutionalized pattern of action in education. In Guinea, however, the extent and patterns of consultation still seem to depend, to a large extent, on the approach adopted by the minister herself/himself, since the administrative framework remains largely centralized.

'Bottom-up' policy adjustment and implementation: steering from below?

Ministers of education often have short tenures. As a result, the continuity and sustainability of educational policies suffer in many instances. Sometimes ministers also have incomplete knowledge of the functioning of the education system. Often they are criticized for being 'too far from the grassroots' where teaching and learning actually take place. *How can we ensure the 'realism' and appropriateness as well as the necessary minimum level of continuity in educational policy making under such circumstances?*

On the one hand, this raises questions as to which policies and practices of recruitment and professional development of the actors at the 'grassroots' (teachers, school heads, inspectors, local/regional administrators) we may turn to, and what kind of incentives may help to reinforce the impact of these actors on the 'operational character' and continuity of educational policy decisions. On the other hand, it requires addressing the issue of 'decentralization', i.e. what organizational structures and intermediaries between schools and political decision-makers prove satisfactory for both 'bottom-up' communication and consultation and in providing information for flexible policy change, implementation and management across the different levels?

In the case presented by José Weinstein Cayuela entitled 'Ensuring equity and quality of the learning process in a decentralized system: the case of Chile', the author indicates that considerable progress and success have been achieved in decentralizing educational administration in Chile, thanks to consequent adjustments made in the structures and regulating tools (for monitoring, etc.) of the central administration of the Ministry of Education. Inés Aguerrondo points out in her paper entitled 'Decentralization may not be enough', that the essential conditions of successful decentralization, manifest in the case of Chile, did not exist in various other countries of Latin America embarking on similar reforms. Aguerrondo's central argument, however, is that decentralization *alone* does not necessarily lead to increased sensitivity to the needs of the 'grassroots' or 'clients' or eventually to more *diversity, equity and quality* in education.

Responsiveness to the environment: steering from outside?

A ministry of education does not operate in isolation. Its interaction with many different interest groups can help ensure adequate policy adjustments and changes. Sometimes, however, it can overwhelm and block rational policy making and implementation.

- What are the common modes of operation of the most important stakeholder groups (teacher unions, Parents/Teachers Associations (PTAs), employers etc.)?
- Which established processes of information and/or consultation contribute to making education ministries responsive to their environment?
- What role do the mass media play?
- How do external agencies (foreign funding and assistance) impact a ministry of education's decision-making processes?

- Which mechanisms tend to jeopardize the ministry's internal steering capacity or lead to inertia?

Partly contrasting views and experiences on this issue are reflected in the contributions by Cheng Kai-Ming entitled 'Riding the tide: ministries of education in current contexts of change' and Voldemar Tomusk entitled 'The dissolution of steering: higher education policies in Eastern Europe'. Cheng argues that the growing responsiveness of ministries of education and their accelerated policy adjustments to pressures from the system's environment are, on the one hand, a necessity and on the other hand, an opportunity for them to *'harness new energies'* and *'reinforce their legitimacy'*. Tomusk holds, in contrast, that – at least in the case of many Eastern European countries in economic and ideological *'transition'* – the recent trends of globalization have tended to lead to an overwhelming influence of foreign models on national educational policies and management, and eventually to the *dissolution of any 'political steering'* based on genuine interaction between the state and the civil society.

Do internal structures matter: steering from within?

Does the division of labour between ministries as well as the partitioning of MOEs into sub-units have an impact on policy preparation and implementation processes? Is the organizational design of ministries itself a key factor in determining policy outcomes?

What lessons can be drawn, for instance, from attempts to create special 'reform-oriented' units within – or outside – the ministry? Did such initiatives help design adequate and effective new education policies? What kind of organizational change or development is needed to ensure effective and efficient policy implementation and management?

Drawing on a large number and variety of experiences, Mahieddine Saïdi's paper entitled 'How ministry organization impacts educational policy design and management' points out certain organizational features that have proved to jeopardize the effectiveness of policy preparation and implementation, as well as the efficiency of routine administration in ministries of education. Sam Onek's contribution 'Ministry organization and policy formulation: the case of Uganda' indicates how in Uganda, some interesting organizational changes, in particular the creation of new consultative committees, have led to better co-ordination and information flow in the Ministry of Education. Onek also underscores that further organizational improvements are required to enhance transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of organizational behaviour in the Ministry.

PART I
POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION: STEERING FROM ABOVE?

1. FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE[1]

by Aïcha Bah Diallo

Political leadership is the *essence* that provides mandate, legitimization and vision for most of our undertakings in the field of education. Educational administration also constitutes the core of our day-to-day activities in this area. On a regular basis, education administrators are expected to 'steer from above'. The entire education world community agrees that country educational leaders must be in the driving seats.

But what, indeed, would be the best way to address the question of the relationship between these two highly important functions: *political leadership* and *administration of education*? How can one begin to talk about a *rapport* that quite often seems to us so very tenuous? In the hope of finding some clues, I did what most experienced teachers do: I made a detour to the library.

Although I flipped through several books and documents and was able to refresh my memory on a few fundamentals of political leadership and of education administration, I found *nothing* that enlightened me on the *links* between the two. Incidentally, however, as I was consulting a few dictionaries, I was struck by certain peculiar definitions of the terms I was interested in. I found out, for example, that the verb *'to administer'* refers to 'performing a rite' or 'implementing decisions and policies' (probably made elsewhere!). I learnt that *'to steer'*, means 'to decide the order of dealing with business or properties' and that it also implies to forcefully 'bullock'

1. This paper is a tribute to the entire team I was fortunate to lead for 7 years as Minister of Education in Guinea. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all my former colleagues from the Government of Guinea, all the staff of the Ministry as well as each and every student, teacher, school master and parent who made my tenure at the Ministry one of the most rewarding and exciting periods of my professional life.

one's way through. I realised, moreover, that the word *'leadership'* is hardly granted any attention, even in the most reliable Oxford English Dictionary. The term is just entered as a noun referring to what a leader does. *Everybody knows that and it does not get us anywhere at all.*

I had advanced little, after hours spent at the library. Interestingly, nonetheless, this detour confirmed one of my strongest convictions regarding the two issues I wished to explore: there is a subtle *two-way relationship between leadership* and *administration* that is much more complex than it may appear to many. To explain myself, I propose a brief, but closer look, at the role of administrators today.

Who does the steering?

Ideally, rational undertakings start with intent: intent to improve enrolment, intent to develop a more equitable education system, intent to improve the quality of education, etc. Then, programmes and projects are designed in ways that are consistent with these intents (we can also call them *'goals'* or *'objectives'*) in accordance with rationally and scientifically accepted standards.

Please note that I said *'ideally'*. In real life, however, things seem to work the other way around. Often, education administrators, especially practitioners from the developing world, start by identifying not only *what is needed*, but also *what could work*. Through such an exercise, they develop firm convictions regarding what is desirable and what is feasible. Then, they design policies that lead to programmes, which lead subsequently to implementation in the field, etc. In a way, therefore, the *field is at the heart* of their concern and at the *beginning* and the *end* of the process. Thus, policies become, in such perspectives, mostly a tool to rationalize and legitimate actions.

Administration constitutes the '*passage obligé*', the gateway, the bridging link between policy and practice, between political intent and the hard reality of day-to-day business. As such, it plays the difficult role of reconciling the need to maintain the system and the need to lead the changes and the reforms.

Logically, therefore, administrators face a *fundamental dilemma*. On one hand, they are the extended arms of policy-makers; some kind of executive tool that is needed to carry out the system's wills. On the other, administrators have a tremendous influence on the system processes and the policy-makers' capacity to decide. Because, administrators can influence action where it counts the most, that is, *in the field, where things happen*.

Given this complexity, the basic questions would be: to what extent can political leaders such as a minister of education be effective in running an administration at the top level of a given country? Is his/her position, as both a member of the policy-making apparatus and the lead agent for implementation, bearable? Is it possible to find the *right balance* between political leadership and administration?

In order to answer these questions, and as we are forced to recognize that *"the field is at the heart of our concern and at the beginning and end of the process"*, please allow me to talk about my personal experience as Minister of Education in Guinea. Allow me to draw a few lessons from what I believe to have been *a success story* in the tumultuous history of education in Guinea.

The case of Guinea

Before I was appointed Minister of Education in 1989, Guinea had gone through a long and painful experience of a one-party ruling

system that lasted three decades and was followed by a military regime. During the one-party system, education was used as a political tool to advance ideologies, fight opponents, legitimise power and 'buy time' in periods of crises. In a way, the *political system took education as hostage*. Since the country faced regular political crises between 1958 and 1984, education was characterized by constant shifts in priorities, drastic changes, regular remodelling of the structures and the organization, and frequent changes of leadership. All of these disrupted the system, as a whole, and installed a serious sense of *insecurity*.

The most damaging consequences were that students and parents kept away from school, teachers and school administrators lost their motivation, parallel educational structures such as *Medersas* developed rapidly, drop-out rates became high and the brain drain from Guinea to the neighbouring French-speaking countries increased. In the late 60s, a policy of *teaching and learning in local languages* was 'hastily designed' and 'poorly implemented'. This led to *lowering the quality of education, increasing ethnicity, discouraging parents, and slowing down student enrolments.*

The one-party system was dismantled in 1984, and replaced by a military rule of young officers with good intentions but poor leadership training and ability. It started with very positive notes but slowly got stifled with contradictions. Right after the *Coup d'Etat* in 1984, the country's new leaders considered reforming education as a priority and held a *National Conference* on the issue. The Resolutions of this Conference encouraged and consolidated new options. However, it took five years to put the proposed measures into practice because of *political resistance*, *insufficient means* (in particular, funding and local expertise) and a need to *proceed with caution*, given the limited human, financial and institutional capacities.

In 1989, when I stepped in as Minister of Pre-University Education, the country issued a Declaration of Educational Policy that set out a 10-year plan for education in Guinea. The Declaration provided the foundation for the development of a three year national programme, the PASE I – *le Programme d'ajustement du secteur de l'éducation PASE.* This was launched in 1990 with the financial support of three major partners: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)/World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the French Co-operation. It was later extended to other partners such as UNICEF, UNESCO, the European Union (EU), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA).

The positive aspect, I noticed very early, was the profound desire of the entire nation to change the way education had been run over the previous 30 years. I tried to capitalise on it. I decided to implement PASE I, defining *nine major sets of activities*. What follows is a brief description of these major activities.

Raising education as a national issue

The first thing I tried to do was to put education above 'politicking', starting with my close environment. The next step was to reach out to other opposition leaders who I was fortunate to know personally. With the country's President, General Lansana Conte, I had a straight and frank discussion and we agreed that education would not figure as a major issue solely for his party's campaign, but a *national issue* that was to be constantly *raised above* the cleavages developed *between and within* political parties.

The growing acceptance of this message placed education above politics, as was demonstrated in the elections (communal,

presidential and legislative). During that period of tense confrontations between interested parties, there was a strong consensus that education was not solely an agenda of the Government but a *national priority*. In a way, this was the most important achievement of our team, because previously, educational development had always been *hampered* by politics.

Reorganizing administration

Developing sound administrative structures was our *second priority*. We launched the reorganization of the system and set measures aimed at *improving management and supervision*. Among other things, the monitoring and evaluation system was improved through training, introduction of new programmes, techniques and equipment and a reshuffling of the ministries in order to create a single *'Ministry'* in full charge of primary and secondary education, including technical and vocational training.

A high-level, inter-sectoral Steering Committee *(Comité de suivi du PASE)* was set-up to ensure that the route indicated for the reforms was followed and that decisions were actually implemented. This Committee, which met every three months, was Chaired by the Ministry of Finance and involved all ministries having a link with education, such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry for the Advancement of Women etc.

Within the ministries of education, a more specialized Steering Committee was set-up *(Comité de pilotage du PASE)*. The task of this Committee was to closely supervise and test projects before large-scale implementation, propose reform initiatives and take the lead between the sessions of the Inter-sectoral Steering Committee This specialized Committee met every month.

An Executive Body, the *Secretariat technique du PASE*, was created to back-up the two Steering Committees and serve as a link between them and other partners (public as well as private). The Secretariat was quite original in its form because it included both nationals and expatriates representing major donors to the PASE. Moreover, the Steering Committees were duplicated at the decentralized level (regions and districts) where representatives of local communities were included in the teams.

At the beginning of each school year, national workshops were held outside the capital, especially in the regions and cities where educational problems seemed to be the most acute. These workshops *aimed at assessing the progress made* in the outlined programmes to readjust and prioritize at local levels. Representatives from the local communities were encouraged to participate. Moreover, these meetings served as a means to keep the population informed and facilitate their participation in the decision-making process. Local, rural media were very useful at this stage: rural radios broadcast information in local languages, and local television channels (especially in the three major cities: Conakry, Labe and Kankan) urged traditional opinion leaders to collaborate and help promote the programmes.

Decentralization

I, myself, convinced the Government of the need to support and encourage a decentralization policy keeping in mind the availability of competent staff. Local and district school administrators were strongly advised to exercise full authority in most decision-making areas and assume responsibility of undertaking activities such as, school construction, hiring of local staff, financing projects, defining time-tables, etc. Special attention was granted to effectively decentralize the budget.

Development of human resources

Developing human capacity was our next priority. A full array of measures was undertaken to better use existing human resources and develop capacities in areas of urgent need. The donor communities were highly instrumental in providing training opportunities for personnel at the ministerial and decentralized levels. Guinea, moreover, received funds not only to develop its educational infrastructures but also to reform the system as a whole. Provisions were made to train local staff members responsible for programme implementation in order to improve their management skills. Among the areas of training, an emphasis was put on skills needed to deal with local community and school-based institutions, participatory strategies, etc. New communication technologies and management information systems were introduced to enable staff members to better perform their duties.

At the school unit levels, measures were undertaken to improve pre-service and in-service teacher training, with an emphasis on participatory pedagogical strategies. At the same time, the personnel (school administrators and teachers) were re-deployed to allow a more efficient use of existing staff. Over 8,000 teachers received training in mathematics and French. Over 1,800 secondary teachers were retrained and re-deployed in primary education where the needs were greater because of the expanding of school enrolment.

A databank of educational personnel was set up and censuses were conducted. Analysis of the data gathered showed the need to undertake a redeployment process for cost effectiveness. The *first step* was to implement a vertical redeployment, which meant transferring from secondary education to primary education all teachers who lacked the necessary qualifications to teach at that level. The *second step* involved a horizontal redeployment in order to

balance the ratio of rural/urban teachers and students. The aim was to reduce the discrepancies observed in the school system between the two zones.

A *third* step involved bringing back to the classroom the teachers who had been working in educational administration or in other education Departments. The first to be targeted were those who were getting paid by the Ministry of Education as teachers and working outside the classroom. In total, as noted above, this policy allowed to re-deploy excess staff to over 1,800 vacant positions in rural schools.

Partnership with donor communities and other ministries

Right from the outset, we tried to work hand-in-hand with external partners such as USAID, UNICEF, French Co-operation, UNESCO, as well as with local CSOs[2] such as the *'Associations des ressortissants'*[3] and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Action Aid. We made sure that international partners accepted to conduct joint reviews to save time, money and other organizational resources.

I also found it of tremendous importance to bring my other colleagues from the National Government on board. It was essential that Ministries such as that of Finance, Internal Co-operation, Youth, Social Services, and others, feel that we are all truly in the same boat.

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2. The Civil Society-Organizations (CSOs): UNESCO conveniently regroups under this acronym all grassroots organizations that have an impact on local community affairs, even when they are not nationally visible. CSOs are known in Guinea for providing significant support for adult education and primary schooling in rural towns.
3. The *'Associations des ressortissants'* are a common feature of social life in African urban cities and abroad. As rural exodus amplifies and cities grow, people from the same villages or regions tend to regroup and form unions that have quite strong social and economic influence on the villages and regions they belong to. They *collect funds* to build schools, reconstruct mosques and churches, install water wheels, repair roads, etc.

It facilitated my work because they realized that their own sector would not achieve their goals *if education did not perform well.* At the end of the day, their support helped me to deal easily with both the donor community and the professionals in various administrative sectors of my Department.

Improving school environment

Not only did we *manage to restore and equip* existing school infrastructures, we also succeeded in getting 3,000 additional *classrooms constructed*, mostly in the countryside and in poor urban districts. Local communities constructed half of these classrooms. Special attention was also paid to the construction of separate latrines for boys and girls and to the provision of running water.

Improving contents and methods of instruction

One of the major concerns of the PASE was to identify the factors that hinder girls' and rural children's access to education. It was decided that the curriculum would be *reviewed* in order to make it *more relevant* and that programmatic and pedagogical actions would be undertaken to overcome stereotyping children from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Here again, local communities, especially opinion leaders, were at the centre of the undertakings. They were solicited at various levels of the process: during the study phase, the drafting of policies and the implementation of the measures adopted.

To serve smaller communities multi-grade schools, in which one teacher instructs students of different age and grade levels, were considerably expanded. This helped increase enrolment and make a more rational use of teachers.

Measures were also undertaken to effectively use trained manpower and available resources by increasing the number of multi-grade classes and through the adoption of double-shift strategies in overpopulated schools with low student/teacher ratios.

'Second chance' programmes were developed to help dropout students and pupils who had no likelihood at all to attend schools. The best known of these *'second-chance'* programmes is the NAFA, a collaborative endeavour involving three partners: Government, UNICEF and local communities. The NAFA Centres were built only in communities that agreed to provide physical facilities, take partial charge of trainers' salaries and provide other forms of support (especially supervisory support through Management Committees *(Comités de gestion)* mainly composed of community members).

The NAFA Centres were part of an overall effort to reduce disparity among the different regions, protect the environment, decrease the gender gap in education, assist and encourage social involvement of youth in general, and girls in particular, in local communities and prepare them to live independent and dignified lives. The NAFA Centres are also involved in formal education and offer trainees the possibility of going back to regular schooling, if they show the desire, and the ability to do so.

A full-fledged community awareness programme

An important part of our priorities was to develop sustainability through an effective participation of local leaders and local communities. During my entire seven-year tenure, I travelled, with my staff, to all parts of the countryside and in most of the city neighbourhoods where our programmes *needed to make an impact.* Local community and religious leaders, business people, school unit administrators, parents, teachers and children were all targeted in our sensitization programme. The importance of Education for All

(EFA) was emphasized; especially *its importance to individuals and to groups, its role as the principal tool for national economic and social development, the need to have all girls attend school,* etc. The technique was not to give lectures but to share information, seek advice and *collaborate* effectively in the *decision-making and implementation processes*. It was always made clear that the PASE was not the Government's programme, but the '*Programme of the People*'.

Thus, the success or the failure of schools would depend on them. We, in the Government, had to be considered just as partners who intend to facilitate fund-raising and technical assistance through national mobilization of resources or through external sources. I used these 'grassroots contact-opportunities' to communicate the message that education was a national responsibility and that promoting education was the responsibility of each and every citizen. As was said above local, rural media were very useful at this stage.

Improving the leadership style

One of my principal, personal goals was to provide leadership through expertise rather than through my position and power as Minister of Education. I was a teacher before becoming a school administrator and then Minister of Education. I dealt with all teachers as my colleagues. This attitude made a tremendous difference and explained largely why teachers accepted some of my initiatives such as staff redeployment. They considered me as a colleague who needed *support in order to win a difficult battle* and they provided me with *all the support I needed*.

The outcome

Thanks to the above measures and many others, the situation improved and the education system was able to *emerge* from decades of under-schooling and poor management. Guinea was able to make

remarkable progress within a few years. The gross enrolment ratio rose from 31.8 per cent in 1990 to 44 per cent in 1993, and 51.1 per cent in 1998. At the same time, first grade enrolment increased from 39 per cent to 50 per cent. The share of national budget allocated to education itself increased from 14 to 25.2 per cent. Overall, there was a growing feeling (and this was a very important achievement) that schools and training centres belong to local communities and not to the government and international donors. In short, my team managed *to improve the education system by:*

- *raising* education above the agenda of a political party;
- *seeking* and getting effective support and help from local communities and the stakeholders at the bottom end (parents/students/community);
- *developing* legitimacy and sharing a national vision through shared educational policy statements;
- *decentralizing* and delegating;
- *seeking* and getting support from other ministries and sectors;
- *advocating* team-work and leading through expertise rather than vested authority;
- *strengthening* human and institutional capacities;
- *associating* all other stakeholders, in particular the teacher/student unions, media specialists, parliamentarians, etc.;
- *leaving administration* to administrators as long as they did not disturb the course of the reform;
- *developing* sound partnership with donor communities; and
- *fighting* corruption.

Conclusion

By undertaking measures such as the ones outlined above, I was able to *find the right balance between my position as a political leader*

and my functions as an executive administrator of the education system of Guinea.

What I learned was that there are no irreconcilable differences between the two functions. All is a matter of *balance and adjustment.* In the context of Guinea, I believe that a minister may steer from above if he/she:

- values differences;
- exercises shared leadership;
- is willing to communicate, share feelings and responsibilities and empathise with sub-ordinate working groups;
- provides opportunity for team-working and individual growth;
- displays a fair mastery of issues that concern teachers, parents and students;
- is able to develop a common goal, structure programmes around such a goal and follow-up;
- reaches the broader society, including opposition parties, community leaders, partners, etc.;
- collaborates effectively with the donor communities and co-ordinates their contribution; and
- leads change initiatives, but also cares for stability and the maintenance functions of administrative leadership.

These were some of the key lessons I learned from my experience in educational development in the 'specific context' of Guinea, but I am sure that there are just as many experiences as there are countries.

2. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

presented by Allan Taylor[4]

The demise of apartheid in 1994 was heralded nationally and internationally as a victory for democracy and human rights. It offered unique opportunities - and responsibilities - to reconstruct a fragmented and deeply discriminatory education system and *establish a unified national system based on democracy, equity, redress, transparency and participation.*

In the *first phase* of our education reform, the Government placed much emphasis on developing legal and regulatory policy frameworks to facilitate changes that included the establishment of organizations and institutions that could create the conditions, and structures, necessary for *effective transformations.*

During the first few years following 1994, the Ministry of Education had to take up three inter-related tasks: (i) *dismantling* apartheid structures and creating a unified education system (ii) *creating* a more equitable system of financing in a context of huge demands on our limited financial resources and (iii) *creating* a policy framework which gave concrete expression to the values that we wanted *to establish* in the post-apartheid state.

Dismantling apartheid-created structures

The first five years of educational reconstruction focused on systemic reform geared to dismantling apartheid-created structures and procedures. From the organizational point of view, this involved

4. This paper was presented by Allan Taylor on behalf of the Department of Education, South Africa.

integrating formerly divided bureaucracies and *transferring institutions, staff, offices, records, assets and more than ten million learners and teachers into a new system*, without a breakdown in *service delivery*. The Constitution provides the framework for a unitary system of education, managed by the National Department of Education and nine Provincial Departments. (The exception is 'Higher Education', for which the National Department has sole responsibility). These departments were established with the help of new and old public servants, under the guidance of the Council of Education Ministers; a Council comprised of the Minister, Deputy Minister and the nine provincial Members of Executive Council (MEC) who are responsible for education in their provinces, as well as all their Heads of Departments.[5]

The enormity of the task must *not* be underestimated. Provincial Departments of Education are much larger and more complex than the National Department. They faced acute problems with their inherited organizational structures. A unified system had to be created across diverse racial and economic conditions, and large geographic areas, in a short space of time. The new Ministry had to 'undo' *more than 40 years* of formal apartheid *educational structures and procedures* in a matter of a few years.

Working towards equity and unity

The Ministry of Education sought not only to create a *unified system* but also develop a shared vision, new values and attitudes as well as an ethos that could motivate achievement of goals. To do so, it also had to pay serious attention to its own role. Organizational cultures from *19 racially and ethnically* divided departments had to be blended and reshaped to define and meet common goals. New

5. Many Members of Executive Council refer to themselves as Provincial Ministers.

civil servants, and those who had been part of the apartheid regime, had to come together to mould a public service with a new working culture.

The National Education Policy Act (1996) gave the Minister of Education the power to determine national norms and standards for educational planning, provision, governance, monitoring and evaluation. The principle of democratic decision-making was to be exercised within the context of the overall policy goals. Consequently, provincial powers and those devolved by the provinces to regions and districts and educational institutions had to be aligned with the goals of equity, redress, quality and democracy. In determining policies, the Minister had to take also into account the competence of provincial legislatures, and the formulation of any relevant, provincial laws relating to education.

Systems and procedures also had to be changed to improve performance and outcomes, as well as teamwork and people-focused service. This was a strategy aimed to improve human capacity at different systemic levels. The Ministry established the Education Departments Support Unit (EDSU) within the national department. The District Development Project was initiated to develop new organizational models, and to improve administrative and professional services at the district level, where the education system interfaces directly with learning sites. An Education Management and Governance Development (EMGD) scheme was designed to establish an inter-provincial network for staff and governance development programmes.

The Ministry's aim was to create an *efficient, accountable and effective* public service that could ensure *equity and quality*. Two of the key aspects of the reforms undertaken concerned the provision of greater technical support to the provinces from the national

Department and the Ministry, and the establishment of a budget based on greater institutional co-ordination rather than legislative prescription. *Even today*, addressing the deep-rooted, systemic and structural inequalities inherited from apartheid and establishing a coherent redress and poverty-targeted strategy, continue to be an enormous challenge.

Significant progress, however, has been made so far in terms of budgetary framework and redress. Mechanisms to achieve redress have been articulated in policies such as the National Norms and Standards for School Funding. This policy provides a framework for allocating non-personnel recurrent costs on the basis of need. Each Provincial Education Department is required to produce a *'resource targeting list'* informed by physical conditions, available facilities, the degree of crowding of the school, educator/learner ratios, the availability of basic services and the relative poverty of the community around the school. The main effect of this formula is that the poorest 40 per cent of schools receive 60 per cent of the provincial, non-personnel schooling budget allocation, and the least poor 20 per cent receive only 5 per cent of the resources. The main aim of the norms and standards is *to redistribute* non-personnel expenditure to the learners most in need. A basic package of R.100 per learner is to be allocated by provinces for support learning materials. In 1996, the Ministry passed the South African Schools Act (SASA), which prioritizes redress and targets poverty in funding allocations to the public school system.

A sound policy framework

The energies of the Ministry of Education, during the first period of democratic rule, were applied to defining a sound legislative policy framework for educational transformation. The South African Constitution provided the base necessary for a *major* transformation.

It stipulated that education be democratized and given a new mandate in accordance with the values of *human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom, non-racism and non-sexism.*

The framework for the policies of the Ministry of Education was set out in the Ministry's first White Paper, "Education and training in a Democratic South Africa: first steps to develop a new system" (February 1995). This document took as its starting point the 1994 educational policy framework of the African National Congress (ANC). After extensive consultation, negotiation and revision, it was approved by the Cabinet and has served as the principal reference point for subsequent policies and legislation.

The first five years of Democratic Government *witnessed significant* reforms in education. These reforms helped establish democratic governance and democratized relations within and outside of the state. They allowed the formation of sound systems at national and provincial levels to *'manage'* reform, *review and strengthen* resource allocation on the basis of redress and equity, *take the* discourse of educational policy and reform into the public arena for debate and discussion and *transform* learning by offering a curriculum that would shape future possibilities for education and training in the nation.

Implementation and delivery

By 1999, systemic transformation in terms of policy was in place, but the challenges of implementation remained, as mandated policy by itself does not lead to institutional change. With new systems of educational administration and governance largely established, we turned our attention to *implementation and delivery.*

In a sober assessment in 1999, the Ministry reported that, while the systemic changes brought about in the first five years provide a progressive and durable basis for improvements in the quality of learning, transformed learning opportunities were not yet accessible to the majority of the poor people. *"Inequality is still writ large in the education system, and too many families are on the receiving end of an unacceptably low standard of education delivery"*. The Ministry responded with an intensive period of consultation and review of the state of the education system, and reported:

> *"The public believes that we have a crisis on our hands. Our people have rights to education that the state is not upholding. They have put their confidence in the democratic process, and returned their government with an overwhelming mandate. After five years of democratic reconstruction and development, the people are entitled to a better education service and they must have it"*. (Minister Kader Asmal, August 1999).

The Minister acknowledged that South Africa had committed leaders, and excellent policies and laws for the 21st Century. At the same time, *large parts of the system* were seriously dysfunctional, rampant inequality existed, teacher morale was low, governance and management were yet to strengthen, and quality and learning outcomes were poor.

Meeting the challenge through Tirisano

Against this backdrop, Minister Asmal outlined his 'Call to Action' in July 1999. This was made operational in January 2000 in a plan known as the Tirisano Plan. In Sotho, one of South Africa's 11 official languages, 'Tirisano' means 'working together.' The choice of this word reflects the belief that an education system for the 21st Century cannot be built by a small group of people, or even by the government alone. It calls for a massive social mobilization of parents, learners,

educators, community leaders, NGOs, the private sector and the international community, *all motivated* by a shared vision.

The Tirisano Plan identified *nine strategic priorities* as the basic building blocks for the development of a fully functioning education and training system that would *"drive South Africa into the 21st Century and contribute to the health and prosperity of the nation"*. In each of the priority areas a set of programmes and related projects were defined with their respective targets, performance indicators and expected outcomes.

Co-operative governance

The principle of 'co-operative governance' (the term used in the Constitution) underpins the major aims of our education system. 'Co-operative governance' is a South African phenomenon arising from our unique political context and deals with the *sharing of powers and responsibilities* between the national government and provincial governments. However, within an agreed national framework, provinces are given a significant degree of autonomy in educational provision. The establishment of decentralized governance at the provincial level has been one of the most complex areas of education transformation. Of particular concern has been the constrained ability of provinces to apply national norms based on principles of equity and redress because of organizational, financial and service delivery limitations. Since 1997, there have been calls - in education but, also, in all sectors - for the national government to intervene in order to safeguard the overall objectives of transformation. In mid-1998, the National Department of Education indicated that it would actively intervene to safeguard key transformation initiatives, such as curriculum and the provision of learning support materials. Moreover, it would review mechanisms to strengthen inter-governmental relationships.

The Minister's statement of July 1999 on *co-operative governance*, emphasizing a greater degree of co-ordination and direction by the national sphere, *was welcomed*. It gave support for systemic reform through: (i) the provision of technical support; (ii) central funding for specific projects; (iii) collaboration regarding provincial budgeting; (iv) deployment of national officials for the purpose of monitoring; (v) offering support in provinces (particularly to review the implementation of national policies and legislation) and (vi) greater accountability through regular reporting.

Mindful of the need to develop a greater capacity to realise the goals of *co-operative governance*, and in view of the programme of the Tirisano Plan, as from October 2000 a stronger emphasis has been placed on *'managing'* the education system. Thus, greater attention is being given to:

- *immediate* appointments of heads of provincial departments, where vacancies arise, taking into account the importance of their leadership;
- *reviewing and overhauling* the operation of the Council of Education Ministers.
- *intensifying* the dialogue with the Ministry of Finance with respect to adequacy of management of provincial education budgets, in order to improve resource flows to essential areas of service provision; and
- *opening dialogue* with development agencies to achieve additional and higher quality technical support for key national and provincial projects.

Better information flow between the national and provincial departments, and regular monitoring and evaluation of provincial activities occur through a regular report to the President. Capacity building for better information use, and analysis, is supported through a grant from the European Union (EU).

There is now a greater consolidation of links between institutions, the national and provincial legislatures, the Members of the Provincial Executive Councils responsible for education and the National and Provincial Education Departments. Of particular importance is the re-enforcement of the role in 2000/2001 of the Council of Education Ministers (the political representatives), together with that of the Minister and Deputy Minister of Education, in providing critical, political leadership and direction. Equally importantly, there has also been a reinforcement of the role of the Heads of Education Departments Committee (the administrators) in providing significant legislative and policy support to the National Department of Education and the Ministry.

The results of a strengthened inter-governmental co-operation, over the last three years, can be seen today in the improved administration of the senior certificate (school-leaving) examination and the implementation of the matriculation improvement programmes, the improved levels of procurement and delivery of learning support materials, and the development of a functional Education Management Information Systems (EMIS). Capacity building for provincial departments to manage and utilise data at a provincial level continues. Provinces have participated fully in the School Register of Needs database and are using it for decentralized project planning. Also, a more robust EMIS at national and provincial levels is providing indicators to evaluate the extent to which equity, and redress targets, are *being achieved.*

Stakeholder participation

One of the key commitments of the National Education Policy Act is the participation of stakeholders in policy development. The formulation of policies since 1994, has allowed the development of structures and mechanisms for active stakeholder participation. For

example, the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) and the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) demonstrate ways in which stakeholders can participate in developing policies. Two other instances can be found in the creation of expert advisory bodies, such as the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

At the institutional level, *policy frameworks* have been established for the creation of participatory structures in, for example, higher education institutions (institutional forums to facilitate the creation of legitimate and representative governing councils) and schools (school governing bodies). Such forums and bodies have now been *democratically established.*

Problems of capacity, genuine representation and effectiveness in stakeholder participation need to be monitored. Intensified and extensive training is necessary (which in turn require resources and support), as is time. One concern is the shortage of strong social movements in communities and civil society that could strengthen participation in governance. The Tirisano Plan calls for schools to be centres of community life is one response to this concern. More careful audits of what is occurring, and the effectiveness of co-operative governance in practice, will *need to be* undertaken.

Partnerships and international relations

Central to our policy framework is the contention that a high quality education sector cannot be built by the government alone. For, it depends upon creative and dynamic partnerships between the public sector, civil society and international partners. Several working partnerships have been consolidated; many more continue to be built, as the capacities of various sectors to contribute to educational development are better understood.

Our most important social partners are the teachers' unions of which there are three major ones in the country. The Ministry of Education and the teacher unions have jointly agreed to a labour-relations framework. This encompasses both traditional areas of *negotiation* and issues of *professional concern*, including pedagogy and quality improvement strategies.

Amongst our partners, we also have a number of NGOs. In the field of education and training provision, NGOs are extremely heterogeneous. Historically, organized largely within the broader social movements, they played an important role in challenging apartheid regarding issues of transformation, including in the field of education. Many have operated most effectively at the community level. The NGO sector has undergone a massive process of reorganization since 1994, when many of its leaders moved into the public sector and funds were increasingly channelled away from NGO's to support the Government more directly.

The current NGO sector is emerging as an important partner in educational transformation, and is often a *source of creativity and innovation*. We are working with NGOs and the private sector to expand our collaboration, particularly in the areas of educator training, school improvement, Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Further Education and Training (FET), as well as evaluation, research, and monitoring. The private sector, in particular, is increasingly engaging in the provision of basic education by funding further education and training initiatives, building schools in needy communities, and ensuring provision of teaching and learning equipment.

Several other partnerships have been consolidated, providing working models of educational transformation through public-private partnerships. The Business Trust is a partnership between

the business community and the Government and was implemented in education through three NGOs over five years. Through the Business Trust we have established: the READ organization now operating in 1,200 primary schools; the Joint Education Trust covering 600 high schools; and the National Business Initiative-Colleges Collaboration Fund, which covers all 152 technical colleges. They represent significant examples of important working partnerships. More and more commonly, committed private sector entities will provide financial support to NGO projects prioritized by the public sector. The success of key national initiatives – including the National Literacy Initiative – will largely depend on the partnerships of the private and NGO sectors.

The International Community has played an important role in working with the Department of Education and contributing to education transformation. The Department of Education co-operates with the United Nations system and with numerous donors to improve access to basic, further and higher education. Development co-operation partners such as the Department of International Development Co-operation (DANIDA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Department for International Development (DFID), UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, Irish Aid (IA), the Finnish Government and the European Union (EU), have been instrumental in providing technical and financial assistance to the national and provincial departments of education. The Ministry has also played a leading role in the development of a Southern African Development Co-operation (SADC) protocol, and participates in the Education for All (EFA) initiative. It has a strong collaborative relationship with UNESCO Headquarters.

A key initiative, in this regard, was the undertaking given by the UNESCO Conference of African Ministers of Education (MINEDAF) in 1998, to offer access to South Africa's higher educational institutions to exchange programmes with scholars and postgraduate student from the African Continent

Conclusion

We have come a *long way* since 1994. Our achievements are all the more remarkable, given our inherited *financial, structural and human limitations*. We began by creating policy frameworks and regulatory and procedural mechanisms, to make the educational ideals, we imagined in the dark days of apartheid, come true. From 1999, we began a conscious process of targeted actions focused on implementation. This is an ongoing and recursive process. The challenge that we face is to deepen our efforts at the levels that matter most: *in educational institutions and amongst learners.*

PART II
BOTTOM-UP POLICY ADJUSTMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION: STEERING FROM BELOW?

1. ENSURING EQUITY AND QUALITY OF THE LEARNING PROCESS IN A DECENTRALIZED SYSTEM: THE CASE OF CHILE

by José Weinstein Cayuela

I wish to present here a synthetic and critical view of the *decentralization/de-concentration process* that has been taking place in the Chilean education system over the last 20 years. I have purposefully used the term *process*. For, although it was not free of tensions and mistakes, decentralization in Chile has been a dynamic and flexible experience and one in which the central structure, the Ministry of Education, has played a key role. We *did not* adopt a pre-established and fixed model.

The Chilean political context of the last few decades has undoubtedly contributed to the uniqueness of its education system. Marked by a military regime that, amongst other things, deeply transformed the framework of the country's legal and economic institutions, new policies had to be designed by the two successive democratic governments within highly restrictive conditions.

The Chilean school system comprises eight years of compulsory primary education plus four years of non-compulsory secondary education. Nonetheless, universal secondary enrolment has been almost *completely achieved*. Pre-school education is provided by different public and private institutions and is non-compulsory.

From the administrative point of view, the Chilean education system comprises two kinds of state financed establishments: 'municipal' schools (public schools managed by the municipalities) and 'private' schools subsidized by the Government. Together, they account for 92 per cent of school enrolment; private establishments fully cover the remaining percentage.

Administrative decentralization in the eighties

As I have already pointed out, rather than a specific model, the current Chilean education system is the outcome of a complex process initiated in the country more than two decades ago. Its origins can be traced back to the institutional reforms launched in 1980 by the military regime that had, in fact, laid the foundations for the decentralized and demand-financed education system now operating in the country.

At the beginning of the eighties, Chile had greatly expanded its school coverage and provided an answer to the problem of access to basic education. Secondary education enrolment rates had been growing steadily, it continued to do so in spite of the economic crisis that hit the country in the mid 80s, and included 75 per cent of the 14 to 17 age-group of the student population.

Although full coverage had still not been achieved (especially at the pre-school level and the last grades in rural schools), school system efficiency was given priority by the military government. In accordance, it aimed its criticisms at the education sector's inefficiency, its centralized bureaucracy and heavy public expenditure. It thus sought to reduce these significantly, under the premise that the key problem was the central management of schools by the Ministry of Education. It is worth noting, that the negative assessment of the state's role in education by the military regime's political ideologists and the ensuing *liberalization-privatization process* were extended to other sectors, such as that of health, pension funds and basic services.

The main features of the neo-liberal restructuring process included the following:

- higher degree of private sector participation through an increase in the number of private establishments with increased enrolment in these institutions through an improved system of state subsidies. The enrolment rate in subsidized private schools jumped from 22 per cent in 1981 to 42 per cent of the total enrolment in 1989.
- transfer of administration of primary and secondary public schools to the municipalities. Municipal governments assumed responsibility for school infrastructure and for management of staff and finance of the establishments that were under the Ministry of Education. As a result, pre-school and primary and secondary establishments are no longer under the Ministry's administrative control and the country's 341 municipalities are now responsible for the management of 6,290 establishments.
- an attempt to deregulate the teacher labour market through the creation of a free market for private as well as municipal teachers (conditions that prevailed until 1991).
- implementation of a financing system through a state subsidy for municipal and subsidized private schools based on an average monthly student attendance.
- creation of the System for the Measurement of Educational Quality (SIMCE) which employs national standardised tests to measure learning outcomes in every establishment and in different grades.

Patricio Aylwin's Government

The above describes the legacy inherited by the first democratic government (1990-1994) and the foundations on which it had to build its educational policy in 1990. The position adopted by the new Ministry of Education in its relationship with educational establishments was *'continuity with change'*.

On the one hand, it did not immediately substantially modify either the legal architecture of decentralized management or its central

structure. On the other hand, it introduced changes in the management of its organization, its resources and competencies together with new objectives and, also, propitiated the transition from decentralized management to *'pedagogical decentralization'*.

In terms of educational policy, the first four years of the 'Concertation' Government were marked by a clear emphasis on initiatives aimed at a *substantial improvement of learning outcomes* for the majority of students. This was embodied in the slogan "Quality education for all". In order to improve quality, the Government implemented targeted initiatives such as the *P-900* programme. This programme was specifically designed for the neediest basic school population. Other programmes such as MECE-Basica (Improvement of Equity and Quality of Basic Education) and MECE-Rural were also implemented. A fund was created to finance School-Based Improvement Plans (PME), designed by the schools themselves. This initiative aimed at fostering teachers' creativity and pedagogical autonomy and at generating a new organizational culture within the school community.

Another important initiative undertaken by the Government was to improve teachers' salaries and working conditions. In 1991, the enactment of a new legal framework, the Teachers' Statute, allowed teachers *to recover* their teaching functions, seriously impaired by the military administrative reform. Common norms were established for all teachers in relation to participation, autonomy and professional responsibility. This also allowed teachers of the municipal sector to establish a professional career and provided them with incentives consistent with the goals of improving quality and equity of education, for example, inducements and rewards for professional development and bonuses for hardship (isolation, rural areas, high social vulnerability).

The implementation of the Teachers' Statute, and the ensuing agreements, resulted in a substantial improvement of teacher's real salaries. Many of them were only receiving the minimum wage established by law.

Eduardo Frei's Government

With the *'Concertation's' second Government* (1994-2000), the education reform was institutionalized as a major task. The Government convened a National Commission on the Modernization of Education with representatives of different political, social and union sectors. In this respect, it is important to underscore that the 'Concertation' Government made serious efforts to generate a broad national consensus on the current and future educational needs of the country, and on the main outlines of the education reform. This consensus allowed the definition of a state educational policy that goes beyond the particular options of the government in charge, thereby ensuring continuity of educational practices in the medium- and the short-term.

The Commission's objective was to generate an agreement on the educational policies to be implemented in the following years. It concluded with five fundamental recommendations:

(i) need to make quality education for all, the highest priority;
(ii) urgency of reforming secondary education;
(iii) necessity of strengthening the teaching profession;
(iv) need to increase school autonomy in order to raise effectiveness; and
(v) need to make a national commitment to increase total spending for education from 4.5 per cent to 8 per cent of GDP.

The national agreement fuelled a series of far-reaching initiatives, such as the Improvement of Equity and Quality of Secondary

Education *(MECE-Media)*. Schools were equipped with computers through the nation-wide school-computer network *Enlaces* (Linkages), positioning Chile as a pioneer in computer education among other Latin American countries. The initially planned in-service training and professional development programmes were massively implemented thus strengthening and infusing teachers with the spirit of the Reform and the country's new educational needs. Another core initiative implemented during these years was the extension of the length of the school day in order to give students more time in the classroom to meet the requirements of an increasingly demanding school curriculum. (International studies have shown a strong correlation between hours spent at school and learning outcomes).

Stocktaking

Looking back at the last ten years of educational management by a Democratic Regime, the balance *does come out as positive* in general terms. In the *first* place, education is at the core of state policies. Owing to this factor - and to the country's strong economic performance – spending on education has tripled in the last decade. From the standpoint of policies aimed at improving equity and quality of the education system, results are fairly auspicious: teachers' working conditions have greatly improved in the last ten years and the reform's basic guidelines have generated strong teacher support and commitment. Curricular programmes and textbooks have been adapted to meet our society's needs and to respond to world globalization. There has also been an important allocation of school resources (classroom libraries, information technology, Internet); and a gradual implementation of the full-length school day.

Over these last ten years, we have laid the foundations of the education reform. Now we must broaden its scope and move towards effective autonomy of local agents. This involves addressing the

problem of management at the municipal and school levels. It also implies curricular management of that 'black box' – the classroom – where the whole learning process takes place. In sum, we must tackle the basic problem of *social inequality* and its effects on education. We must also address the problem of institutional organization and management of the education system at all levels.

How to ensure equity and quality?

After this brief historical overview of two decades of educational policies in Chile, the question that inevitably arises is: *"How can equity and quality of the learning process be guaranteed in a system in which the Ministry of Education is not responsible for school administration?"*

This issue embodies the dilemma of educational policies in Chile, and has been addressed over the last years by the Ministry of Education through different lines of action that underscore the *supervisory, articulating, promoting and proactive* role that the state must play in order to *guarantee equity and quality*.

The Chilean Government's will to assume these responsibilities is evidenced by the initiatives that it has already taken, such as *curriculum development, cognitive evaluation indicators* to assess teaching quality and *targeted policies* for disadvantaged students. We also find evidence of the Government's will in initiatives aimed at impacting the variables that promote *improved learning outcomes* and *teacher professionalism* as well as in its initiatives to *finance and allocate resources* to the system, and *protect* and *guarantee* rights. Finally we have to add to these the initiatives concerning administration of the system itself, which comprises issues such as school autonomy and, indeed, the modernization of the Ministry, a process that is currently in the making. What follows is a brief outline of the major programmes introduced over the last ten years.

A new curriculum

On the last day of the military rule, (March 10, 1990) the regime enacted the Constitutional Law on Education (LOCE) that established curricular decentralization. From the nineteenth century onwards, education in the country had been regulated by curricular programmes that were designed by the MOE. The Constitutional Law established that the Ministry now had to define a general framework of 'Minimal Curricular Objectives and Basic Contents'. Within this framework, schools were granted the option of designing and implementing their own curricular programmes. Once more, the democratic governments had to make use of an instrument created by the military regime, *re-orienting* its goals and objectives.

The *curricular reform* not only set out to update the school curriculum, it also introduced guidelines and transversal elements in order to strengthen values that promote a democratic spirit. It sought to prepare students to face the challenges of globalization and teach them how to value every region's local characteristics.

In this sense, Chile's option – an option chosen by many countries, including some with strong decentralization traditions – has been to develop a core national curriculum. This does not imply that it is rigidly fixed or that it cannot be adapted to regional needs. The point is that *it is the State that must guarantee the quality of these curricular programmes*. Once the 'quality ground' has been defined by the state, local communities are free to develop their own initiatives. In practice, very few have done so. Those who have chosen to take their own initiatives belong to powerful school communities with strong competencies and interests in specific areas (religious, technical or scientific). The great majority of schools have adopted the core national curriculum, as it is. This is a fact that illustrates the *limits of the so-called curricular decentralization*.

National Assessment System

As said before, we believe that decentralization can be conceived only as long as *equity and quality* of the learning process can be ensured. Therefore, assessment of quality of education is an essential tool guiding our policies. If decentralization is implemented without a system of assessment of the quality of education, it will probably result in great disparities and inequalities. *Supervision of the system*, another important function carried out by the Ministry during the last ten years, allows the Government to guarantee *quality for all* correcting inequalities through *active discriminatory policies* in favour of those areas or sectors with higher socio-educational vulnerability.

The System for the Measurement of Educational Quality (SIMCE) introduced more than a decade ago, is a fundamental element of the Government's educational policy since it allows for a periodical assessment of a student's cognitive achievement, thus completing the information on educational resources. The measurement system is administered periodically at the national level, assessing educational quality at three school levels in an alternating order: the 4th grade, the 8th grade and the 10th grade.

SIMCE not only introduced a *culture of assessment*; it has also become a *tool* to inform parental school choice by *providing indicators* to assess school quality. Additionally, it provided the Ministry with an instrument to re-direct certain policies (for example, granting stronger emphasis to transformations occurring within the classroom, extension of pre-school education, complete secondary education for all, reinforcement of information technology, allocation of resources for the worst-off, etc.). SIMCE data have also been used as the basis for targeted programmes such as *P-900* and *MECE-Rural*, and they have fuelled the creation of teacher's

professional development programmes where weaknesses were detected.

Thus, SIMCE has fed information into the assessment and incentives system that seeks to improve the school system's performance. School establishments with the highest scores and teachers working at these schools are granted incentives provided by the public budget assignment for schools.

It should be noted that the quality assessment data have not only proved useful for the system itself, they have also been essential for every school establishment, providing a fundamental input for each school to assess its strengths and weaknesses and to set new learning objectives.

Teacher professionalization

Over the last decades, public policies have shifted from a position in which traditionally teachers were treated as Civil Servants in a welfare and central regime, to a policy of extreme privatization of the sector's employment conditions. This was characteristic of the decentralized, subsidizing state that emerged from the 1980 neo-liberal restructuring process. From this initial scheme, the state has developed policies that seek to strike a balance between national regulations and local administration (by the municipalities or private supporters). The Government's goal is to ensure *equity and quality* of education as well as respect for the teacher's legitimate rights within a context of decentralized human resources management.

With regard to teacher's wages, there had been a shift from the conventional system of fixed wages that gave weight to seniority (1973-1980) to a system of heterogeneous salaries based on market criteria, but in conditions of arbitrary inequality in favour of employers (1980-1990). From this point, the Government moved to

a mixed system that promotes a platform of fixed wages guaranteed by law and automatically readjusted according to the cost of living, together with a merit-pay scheme based on performance. The Government has sought to combine *an improvement of salary conditions with differential salaries for excellency, higher responsibilities or performance in difficult and at-risk conditions in socio-educational terms.*

Policies that address normative issues and salary conditions have been considered part of the Chilean effort to achieve an education reform. Additionally, policies regulating initial training and professional development inside the country, or abroad, have become one of the key elements of the reform and are referred to as *'teacher professional development'* or *'strengthening the teaching profession'.*

At present, however, we are faced with the paradox of *a ministry that is not responsible for hiring teachers but has the responsibility of professional training and development.* It must also negotiate salary demands directly and centrally with teachers, having to bear the political costs of this function, especially when it has to deal with a union that has a very strong mobilization power in the country.

This situation has generated a strong resistance from the National Municipal Association and the National Confederation of Private Schools (CONACEF); entities which would like to (and should, according to the system's logic) negotiate directly with teachers, just as every private institution does with its employees. The Teacher's Association has resisted this initiative on the ground that it threatens to dismantle the union's force. As for the Government, it has also preferred to negotiate collectively with teachers as they are considered to be one of the fundamental pillars of the education reform and should be kept as *strategic partners.* But fundamentally, the Ministry is interested in fixing base salaries, with the

understanding that administrators can offer higher wages in parallel agreements with teachers under their management. Additionally, the latest negotiation with the Teacher's Association resulted in the adoption of a common platform to deepen the Reform and to continue its trend.

Improving the system of financing

The administrative decentralization of the eighties, as we noted, led to a financing system channelled through a state subsidy for municipal education. This system, designed from a market theory perspective, has encountered strong resistance from teachers. The fact is that, over these last years most countries have been moving towards a demand-driven financing system in order to overcome management and quality problems that afflict the school systems.

This state subsidy, which consists of an allocation granted on the basis of average student attendance, varies according to school-level and type of school. In order to be eligible, school administrators must meet certain requirements: they must obtain official recognition, adopt the established curricular norms, hire competent staff, comply with statutory norms and provide an adequate infrastructure to students.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for subsidy allocations through its de-concentrated organisms. It is also in charge of supervising and controlling compliance with existing norms and obligations. The Ministry of Education's Provincial Departments are in charge of carrying out the supervisory procedures through a special *body of administrative inspectors* that *is different* from the *body of pedagogical supervisors*.

This demand-driven financing system relies on the existence of indicators that allow parents to assess the quality of services

provided by school establishments, such as the assessment data provided by SIMCE. But we know that this type of indicator also generates perverse effects since it may provide an incentive for schools to improve their average results by excluding students with learning difficulties or with lower performance.

The problem caused by this type of competition is inherent to the lack of *'perfect'* information with regard to the school system's 'product' and to the need to generate indicators capable of measuring this product. But these measurements need to include the school establishment's context and its students' characteristics. This is the reason why we believe that the correct option is to *improve the quality* of indicators in order to ensure that they reflect the objectives of the educational policy and *to avoid* perverse effects.

Simultaneously, the Ministry of Education has sought to generate incentives that reward teaching quality. To this effect, it has created instruments such as the System of Merit-Awards to Schools (SNED), introduced in 1996. The SNED allocates larger subsidies to 25 per cent of the best performing schools. The awarded sum must be transferred entirely to the schoolteachers. The SNED initiative seeks to measure the added value of school establishments, thus correcting SIMCE results concerning those factors that are extrinsic to the school's performance and which, according to international data, basically correspond to the socio-economic level and cultural capital of students' families.

Guarantee for protection of rights

The Ministry of Education, Chile, also plays the role of a *mediator* in situations of conflict. In a system such as ours, with a strong market orientation, the tensions between a state that proclaims the right to education, and a private or semi-private sector that claims the right

to freedom of education, are evident. In this regard, the Ministry has adopted both a *control and a fostering attitude*. Thus, on the one hand, it has adopted a *supervisory* role in order to guarantee compliance with certain basic principles (quality education, non-discrimination, good conditions of school establishment, etc.) and, on the other hand, it ensures an effective *management* of state resources.

In accordance with the Subsidy Law, the Ministry has the faculty to retain or eliminate funds whenever educational establishments do not comply with the Constitutional Law on Education (LOCE), which, among other things, regulates non-compliance cases. As a result of the Government's initiative, last year this law incorporated an amendment that makes it compulsory for school establishments to admit pregnant students, or adolescent mothers, into the classroom, since in the past there had been a large number of discrimination cases.

Together with these supervisory functions, the Ministry has sought to adopt *an attitude of guidance, favouring agreements over imposed measures*. This attitude is reflected in several dialogue initiatives taken by the Government when conflictive issues are brought up by different political and social sectors. We are thus contributing to the creation of a *culture of tolerance and mutual respect*. We are convinced that ensuring norm compliance is insufficient and that we must seek to promote a new school culture that refuses to tolerate discriminations of any kind.

Improving management of school system

Finally, I would like to say a few words about the administration of the school system. As we have seen, although the 'Concertation' governments' position has been to maintain the administrative

structure of the system, we have focused our efforts on a substantive improvement of the process of devolving responsibilities to the municipalities. This is being done in order to achieve an authentic educational decentralization without having to sacrifice *quality and equity* and without transforming the process into a mere ministerial de-concentration.

Even though the Government has emphasized the progressive autonomy of regions, municipalities and schools, there are still some important shortcomings. They mainly result from the municipality's persistent budget deficits, to the lack of training in school management and to ill-defined roles and responsibilities. These often lead to administrative duplication or *'grey zones'*.

In order to address this situation, the Government is undertaking initiatives such as the Annual Plans for Municipal Education Development (PADEM). This is a planning instrument that seeks to provide an answer to the problems of *fiscal deficits* in municipal budgets, of overstaffed schools and of the lack of long-term strategies in the municipal management of the education system.

In this sense, it is necessary to recognize that in order to function properly and efficiently a decentralized system requires time.

Conclusion

Even though our country's Ministry of Education is a state organ defined by law as a technical organ with regard to decisions adopted by the Executive Power, I believe that the examples I have provided illustrate the political dimension of the institution. Its field – *education* – involves the participation of different social actors, some of them with powerful corporate organizations and a strong cultural and social influence. Thus, education is a field in which different – and often competing – interests, and cultural visions, legitimately

find an expression. In a democratic and participatory scenario, the Ministry of Education cannot operate as a technical body that is neutral, subsidiary and guided by an efficiency criterion. It must position itself as *a regulating institution that promotes educational policies built on the principles of quality, equity and participation.*

Our Political Constitution not only proclaims freedom of education but also the right to education. Given that fact, the Ministry of Education must address the demand for an improved capacity of regulation and control in order to correct certain distortions introduced by a market economy orientation and by certain municipal and private agents, responsible for educational establishments. *Public opinion has also demanded a stronger 'protagonism' – an effective protection of citizens.* Recent studies reveal a strong proclivity towards state intervention in the management of education.

We must, however, also continue moving towards an authentic decentralization of the system, transferring decision-making powers to local actors, strengthening their competencies and mobilizing involvement with the country's major educational and development goals. This will be necessary if we wish to prevent the process from translating itself into a transferral from a central Ministry, as it often happened in the past, to an all-embracing local administration, as it is often happening in the present. We must *seek out and empower* community actors capable of fostering participation in the administration of education in every school establishment.

The actions of the Ministry of Education must also be transformed into a learning process so that it can adapt its institutional practices throughout time. We will continue holding on to a pragmatic perspective as well as to a long-term vision in the design and implementation of our policies, re-orienting our efforts according to the results obtained and pursuing national agreements on

educational topics. Our eventual efficacy will reveal itself in our capacity to lead a school system *no longer* under our direct administration and one in which influence, knowledge and agreement *carry more weight* than yesterday's bureaucratic control.

2. DECENTRALIZATION MAY NOT BE ENOUGH

by Inés Aguerrondo

Over the last few decades an increasing number of educational reforms has been undertaken in many regions of the world. Many of them have at least one common trait: they have been the result of government decisions. Educational reforms have clearly been a matter of public policies and, in fact, a matter of central public policies. The consensus seems to have been that without central decisions, there can be no educational reform.

Our general experience, so far, also allows another statement: *educational reform is a very complex issue*. In the past, academic discussions were mainly devoted to the content of change; today we discuss not only the content of change but also how to manage it. The important changes that affect society today (for instance, globalization) are, in turn, changing social demands and posing strong challenges to education systems. Because educational reform is a public necessity, the responsibility of leading change strategies naturally falls upon the government (and the public organization structures).

Educational reforms involve a lot of actors and they certainly involve political decisions and require political will. But political will *is not* always enough. Experience also shows that bureaucracy very often hinders political decisions towards change. Responding to the need for educational change thus implies that the public sector itself has to simultaneously initiate necessary changes and devise, as well, the means to manage such changes.

We have witnessed a first wave of educational reforms, oriented towards decentralization, targeting reduction of bureaucratic and hierarchic public structures. This has become a well-known practice.

Today, a number of genuine cases of decentralization or de-concentration of central power towards schools can be found in Latin America and in many other regions of the world. Studies related to such experiences emphasize two main aspects: (i) the redistribution of decision-making power among the different levels of the education system and (ii) the positive consequences of redesigning procedures such as those related to teacher assignment or the system of school financing. Among the cases cited by experts, the Chilean case is one of the most interesting. This is because firstly, the decentralization system of this country has already been in place for nearly 20 years now and secondly, a *'continuity with change'* strategy was adopted by two successive democratic governments in order to review decisions taken earlier by the military government.

However, as Weinstein Cayuela rightly points out, offering local communities or schools the freedom to make their own decisions, and take initiatives, does not always guarantee that the people concerned actually avail of such opportunities in practice.[6] Talking about the curricular reform in Chile, Weinstein notes that although local communities were allowed the freedom to take their own initiative and adapt the core national curriculum to their own regional needs, in practice, very few have done so. A large majority of schools adopted the curriculum as it was, thus illustrating the limits of the so-called curriculum decentralization.[7]

These, and other similar cases, invite us to focus our attention not only on what schools and communities do (or are able to do), but also on what the central government structure requires in order to foster a valid decentralization process. In most cases so far, decentralization of schools has not been accompanied by a

6. See José Weinstein Cayuela: "Ensuring equity and quality of the learning process in a decentralized system: the case of Chile" in the article that precedes.
7. See Weinstein Cayuela in the preceding paper.

reorganization of ministries of education. This is not only the result of poor policies; it also results from lack of academic reflection on this issue. Even when school decentralization has largely been studied, discussed and also funded by international agencies, as some researchers have already noticed, *"there is a paucity of comparative studies of departments and ministries of education and of their role in policy making and actual implementation of educational policies"*. (Menendez Weidman, 2001).

The questions that need to be asked today are therefore: *What are the requirements of a central structure when it engages itself in the process of decentralization? How should a ministry of education be reorganized so that it can manage and offer support to the decentralized delivery units (or schools)?*

An education sector has its own specificity

Very often, most public organizations in a country have common structural identities and are administrated in much the same manner. This has proved to be a mistake since there can be no 'general formula' for an efficient management of all public organizations. As a matter of fact, each public sector has some specificity that needs to be taken into consideration when its management strategies are being defined. Given the importance of the issue, it may be useful to outline some of the major traits of an education sector.

1. *A public education sector is a 'big organization'*. Owing to universalization of education, education systems cater to an important percentage of a country's population; often one third or more. Some opinion leaders have even declared that it is the biggest ´enterprise´ of a country and constitutes one of the largest, if not *the* largest, public organization. With the expansion of education, every government has faced the problem of how to manage this *'big*

organization'. The first response has been to decentralize, thus transforming one 'big enterprise' into a lot of 'small/tiny enterprises'. Today efforts are also being undertaken to establish 'medium-sized enterprises'.[8]

2. *Public education is 'irreducible'*. Public education has not yet finished its expansion. Not only is it *'the biggest enterprise'* of a country, it is also *irreducible*. There are still a lot of unsatisfied demands. This is true not only of developing countries but also of the industrialized ones. It does not seem probable that in the near future education systems will diminish. On the contrary, most of them will probably go on growing as a result of the enrolment of new age groups, new social sectors and in response to global initiatives to provide *'life-long education for all'*.

3. *Education systems are 'personnel intensive' and have large job-profile diversity*. Teaching is based on interpersonal relationships. Even when new information technologies are included, they do not replace (and are not likely to do so in the future) the role of teachers. In most education systems, teachers' salaries absorb the most important share of the educational budget, ranging from 75/80 per cent in Central American countries to 85/90 per cent in Latin American and other regions. The main reason is that teaching is a very complex and diversified activity, since the services offered by teachers are supposed to cover all segments of a population and during the entire span of a learner's life. Teachers have to face multiple age groups, learning problems, interests and socio-economic conditions.
4. *Educational outputs are 'intangible'*. Another characteristic that differentiates the education sector from other public sectors is

8. This is the case of Holland where small schools are being merged in order to reach an acceptable size of school organization. Small schools do not disappear but receive administrative sustenance from a bigger school.

the intangible nature of its outputs. The qualitative nature of educational achievements poses typical problems to finding *'adequate tools for measuring'* the *efficacy or efficiency* of education systems (or that of teaching, of schools or of central educational management). Another consequence of this intangibility is that educational achievements can only be assessed on a non well-defined long-term basis. This, in its turn, also contributes to the difficulties of measuring educational output and constitutes an added obstacle to establishing the *efficacy and efficiency* of education systems and their management.

■ No decentralization is possible without a strong central level structure

Today education reform implies state reform. In many regions of the world, the context in which education reforms are taking place is much the same. In fact, education management and organizational changes now figure as part of the state reform processes. However, educational reforms (as a part of the state reform process) constitute a second-generation reform. However, in the case of education, what we require is not only a formal change of structure. What we need basically is a *change of mission*. The present challenge thus is how to shift our target from traditional questions of how to administrate, to the new need for *'managing'* public policies. Today, it is not enough to administrate; it is also necessary to manage complex public policies such as educational reforms.

Management of complex public policies is necessary if the state wishes to maintain its role in society. Since the origin of the modern *State-nation*, the state's role has been to serve as a legitimate trustee of social forces. To do so, it has adopted different models but has always *"performed a double task: produce security and reduce uncertainty"* (Rosenvallon, 1994).

It is thus clear that we have to accept the need to surpass the traditional centralized model of government. But, this does not mean denying the importance of the central (national or federal) level. The results of 'wild decentralization'[9] have not always been positive. As Moises Naim notes with reference to Latin America: *"Paradoxically the tendency towards decentralization in the region ... has contributed to the deterioration of the organizational crisis of the public sector ... In the short term, decentralization has often contributed to weakening the public sector ... Non-planned decisions and political pressures have suddenly overloaded the limited managerial skills of regional and local governments with tasks that they cannot accomplish in a satisfactory way ... Decentralization has also made more complex the management of federal issues by the central government, overloading greatly its decreased co-ordinating skill inside the public sector ... In many countries, there is an impairment of health and education services due to institutional fragmentation and organizational weakness at the local level."* (Naim, 1996).

Centralization and decentralization: the need to undo a traditional opposition

Traditional, hierarchical government can, in a sense, be identified with 'steering from above' while decentralized schools systems can be considered as 'steering from below'. These conceptions have often been seen as two 'opposed' organizational patterns. One way to overcome this view would be to recognize the differences of their aims. The central level of the public sector (in this case, the MOE) has a *directive mission*; the decentralized level, the operative one (such as schools) is in charge of *service delivery*. To form an efficient system, *both* of them are necessary and they must 'fit into' one another.

9. We use the term 'wild' decentralization to denote conceptions that equate decentralization with abolishment of the central level of government.

Both levels have existed from the very beginning of school systems. What is different today is the *rationale* on which the organizational model is based. This reflects our changing views on what each one of them should accomplish. The main purpose of schools, today, is to ensure a quality educational service, adequate to the special needs of each community. This means that a decentralized education system has to allow heterogeneity of pedagogical work, daily routine, teaching materials, etc. so that teachers can adapt to different situations. As to the central level of direction, its main mission should be: (i) to organize all operation units into a 'system' and (ii) direct such a system and steer it through all the changes that need to be introduced in order to survive in the present socio-economic context (Matus, 1987). To fulfil the two missions, a Ministry should accomplish three basic functions:

- ensure unity of the system to preserve and protect social integration;
- ensure quality of results as a response to social demands; and
- ensure equity in the delivery of education to counteract tendencies towards segmentation imposed by the market.

The operational expression of these functions can be resumed in three general tasks. The central level of education administration (ministries) should be capable of (i) producing and handling innovation (ii) measuring results and (iii) applying sanctions (positive and negative).

As Weinstein Cayuela points out, the Ministry of Education in Chile has since long undertaken the tasks mentioned above. It has established a *curriculum reform* (producing and handling innovation) a *national assessment system*, that is, the SIMCE (measuring results) and a new way to *finance the service*, providing incentives to schools to improve their result averages (applying sanctions). However, as Weinstein also argues, the direction that has been taken in the field

of education is globally positive but to make the decentralization truly successful, the Government has to broaden its scope and move towards *granting a more effective autonomy to the local agents*.

The systemic model: a possible response

If we map the most important current organization models of ministries of education, two clear patterns appear: the classical *hierarchical* model and a *systemic* model (Aguerrondo, 2000). The classical one is well known. Its inefficiency to handle modern educational policies, let alone education reforms, has been already widely recognized. The *systemic model appears to offer a more adequate response to our present needs for it has been adopted by countries that have more efficiently tackled state reform*.

The systemic model has three main components: the *executive* component, the *assistance* component and the *control* component. The executive component represents the central line and comprises three levels: (i) *political direction*, (ii) *assisting professional staff*, and (iii) *administration*. Compared to the hierarchical model, a very innovative factor has been introduced here by way of splitting the traditional assistance/control functions into two big categories: on the one side, there are the functions that aim to assist schools; and on the other side, those that aim to control them. By dint of this reorganization, governments are able to use their central level to foster autonomy of schools. They are able to offer schools the possibility of taking their own decisions (schools did not have this opportunity in the traditional settings) while at the same time offering them adequate assistance. Schools, for their part, are conscious that that they must be accountable to, since they are also aware that they will be judged and sanctioned according to their results.

The systemic model can well be considered as a 'net-organization' model (Castells, 1966). In a net-organization each element constitutes an independent knot and is related to all others through various types of relations (subordination, partnership, co-ordination, etc.). There is *neither* a homogeneous *nor* a unique pattern of organization or structure. Each element is able to grow, diminish, appear or disappear according to their particular needs.

This new organizational pattern is capable of handling a common problem that is often impossible to solve through the hierarchical model: *how to manage differences in schools.* The hierarchical model assumes that all schools are even and decision-making is based on what planners term 'an average' school. This assumption, which obviously is not realistic, is at the centre of the inequalities of today's education. The systemic model, in contrast, offers the possibility of treating different schools in different ways. It offers the possibility of 'steering from above' and setting criteria and standards, while at the same time offering the possibility of 'steering from below', thus opening channels to identifying school demands and school requirements.

Need to further explore capacity of the systemic model

The systemic (net) form of organization may well be a way to overcome the opposition between centralization and decentralization. If we consider these concepts not as opposite poles but only as two ends of the same line, we may succeed in undoing the opposition. Since it has the structure of a 'net', the systemic model overpasses the opposition. It creates, when necessary, intermediate chains (knots) between the central and the decentralized levels. The systemic model thus allows for the development of a variety of management patterns that can be adapted to a range of centralized or decentralized functions, even when these concern different sectors

of the same education system. Given the potential of the model to respond to our present organizational needs and the possibilities that it opens, it is necessary to further explore its capacities. It may be helpful if future research poses the following questions:

- Is net-management really capable of integrating different types of elements (units) in a 'system'?
- What are the characteristics of a net composed of symmetric knots, let us say, at the same level?
- What differences will appear if the net is composed of elements belonging to different hierarchies?
- What is the range of hierarchies that a net can support to function adequately?
- What is the managerial difference in a net organized 'from above' (for example, uniting homogeneous schools) and a net organized 'from below' (for instance, when schools themselves take the initiative to merge because they share the same interests)?
- Is there a minimum (or maximum) size required to enter the net as a 'knot'? Do schools enter as one knot or must they be merged? What about small/rural/one teacher schools?

Conclusion

It is not enough to change the organizational pattern of an MOE. There has to be a corresponding change in school organizational patterns also. Studies have shown that the *devolution* of decision-making power to the local/municipal levels *does not* always ensure better rules and patterns of education management. The case of Chile is *exceptional* and we note that it is the result of a structural change pervading several other areas of the state government. Chile *promulgated a set of general laws* that changed the whole structure of the state and it adopted specific administrative rules that increased local management practices.

This is not the case in many other countries, where decentralization of schools has been the almost unique area of state reform. In such cases, schools are asked to take their own initiatives to adapt general policies to their context. But there are no concomitant changes in the upper levels of educational administration. And the upper levels often cannot provide assistance to schools in accomplishing the objectives that have been set.

One main advantage of school autonomy (and decentralization) is that it increases the school's possibilities of handling diversity. If the school unit is unable to do so, then the local or central government can assist them in generating such possibilities. This underlines the fact that decentralization does not mean establishing a 'non-central government' but adopting another model of central government. In the systemic (net) model of organization, there is a need for a central government. But this central government has to allow each unit of its organization autonomy, while at the same time guaranteeing both *quality and equity* of education.

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PART III
RESPONSIVENESS TO THE ENVIRONMENT: STEERING FROM OUTSIDE?

1. RIDING THE TIDE: MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION IN CURRENT CONTEXTS OF CHANGE

by Cheng Kai-Ming

It need not be stressed that ministries of education (MOEs) do not work in isolation. Their policy-formulation and policy-implementation are fully influenced by *economic, political and cultural factors* that stand beyond their own control. Obviously, such factors *pose limits* to the success of education development. However, they can also be fully exploited in order to facilitate education development in the preferred directions. All these have implications on the organization of each MOE.

Classical theories in political science take policy making as a matter of rational analysis. It is like mathematics, whereby we can arrive at a correct result or an optimal solution. Such results and solutions can be achieved through an analysis of reality and a deduction of policies with rigour. In the classical sense, rational analysis guards policy-makers against ignorance, blindness and biases. Hence, in that context, effective policy-development has *to avoid* human elements as much as possible.

The new classics: legitimacy

There have been new classics in political science, which regard policy making as bearing the dual imprint of rational analysis and political negotiations. The former is often referred to as *research*, and the latter related to *participation* or *consultation*. Ministries of education could ill-afford making policies without analysis and research; they could equally ill-afford making policies without the participation of various partners. The political dimension of policy making is essential in a plural polity where consensus in policies is

difficult. The legitimacy of policy making therefore lies in consensual processes of policy making. Participation and consultation provides the policy-makers with such legitimacy.

The rational-political interplay

Research provides the rational basis for policy development. There is a basic assumption that, in order to be effective and successful, policies have to be based on a correct understanding and accurate assessment of reality. Hence, research is essential in policy development. However, anyone involved in policy development would understand that it involves politics, negotiations, persuasions, arm-twisting, etc. These are not always rational.

Nevertheless, it is unfair and inaccurate to perceive political activities as irrational. Political activities, in a slightly post-modern perspective, are necessary because of the diverse ideologies and conflicting interests of the various stakeholders. They are 'rational' in their own rights, and are justifiable in their respective rationales. Political activities make sure that such diverse interest and ideologies reach a comfortable equilibrium without seriously jeopardizing any particular ideology.

Substantive and procedural rationality

There is then this dichotomy between substantive rationality and procedural rationality. In a plural society with various political forces, the rational model of decisions is not always valid. However, where diverse parties may not be able to come to an agreement in terms of the *substance* of policies, it is possible and necessary for them to reach an agreement on the *procedures* through which policies are defined. Such an agreement ensures that the various parties *abide* by the result of such procedures, even if they may not like the results.

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This is how a plural society survives political diversity and avoids pure dogfights.

Legitimacy building

In this context, it becomes essential for a government and, for that matter, for an MOE to establish its legitimacy. That is, regardless of what policies it makes and how successful the implementations, the government has to demonstrate that it has done its best and had the best of intentions, such that it is perceived as a government of the people and for the people. Legitimacy has become one of the major tasks facing any contemporary government. Legitimacy is fundamentally established through long-term success of the economy and the improvements in the society. But it also hinges on shorter-term endeavours whereby the government has to convince, publicize, negotiate, lobby, make sacrifices ... so that its credibility is enhanced over time.

The case in the 21st Century

The changes that took place over the final years of the 20th Century have deeply affected the economy and the society. We have witnessed a definite shift from an industrial to a *'knowledge-based society'* as well as the dramatic development of *'technologies'* and the strengthened trend of *'globalization'*. All these have essential implications for policy development in education. In a knowledge-based society, rational analysis adopts new dimensions. Significant demands have come from changes in the economy, in the workplace and in the world of learning.

The 'economy' has changed. It is a fundamental change from an *industrial economy* to a *knowledge-based economy*. The latter is typified by:

- a predominating service sector;
- hence, a majority of 'white collar jobs' in the traditional sense of the term.

Therefore, the economy expects a system of education that is no longer preparing people for a pyramidal labour structure. This is the reality in most developed countries, and it also is true of most of the urban centres in less developed countries.

The workplace has also changed. Organizations in a knowledge-based economy are fundamentally different from those in an industrial society. Because of the insatiable demand for high-quality customized services, there has been a rapid expansion of the service sector. The workplace is thus being re-organized for total solutions for individual clients. Typically, the workplace is organized in task forces with moving target goals, integrated expertise and activities tailor-made for the clients. Unlike bureaucracies that are known for departments and hierarchies organized according to internal stakeholders, the workplace is increasingly organized into flat, light and loose teams that change over time. In such cases, the gravity of knowledge has been lowered and concentrated at the grass-root, front-line worker level.

Education is therefore expected to provide human resources with abilities that are apt for the workplace requirements: communication, teamwork, innovations, responsibility, independence, and so forth. Among others, individuals are expected to learn new knowledge lifelong.

New resource strategies

Not long ago, the state was regarded as having fulfilled its responsibilities when basic education was provided free. It is

obviously not possible for a state to finance lifelong learning opportunities for everybody. There is, therefore, a question of defining new strategies now for funding education or learning. The issue is how resources in the society at large could be optimally mobilized in order to achieve the maximum learning opportunities for every citizen.

There is a fundamental challenge. When a state's commitment stops at basic education, the success and failure of the children, thereafter, is not a public responsibility. However, in a knowledge-based society, when lack of learning opportunity can deprive a person from leading a meaningful working life, the state is expected to apply interventions that could rescue the deprived and remedy market failures.

New demands on rational analysis

All these have posed new demands on the *rational dimension* of policy-development. Today, changes take place very rapidly and reality is far from being steady. Rational analysis, which implies understanding reality, has to cope with this rapidity. The transition from an industrial to a knowledge-based society has introduced changes that are fundamental and structural. *Rational analysis* is expected to predict the general orientation, alert the decision-makers and provide possible solutions either to overcome such fundamental changes or, at least, to minimize the damages. Decisions in education policies have to be informed by an integrated-knowledge about education as well as the larger social context. There is a need to scan reality in its global context, so that decisions also benefit from knowledge about factors that are not foreseeable in the local scene. Solutions should anticipate further changes in the near future and hence should be open to constant renewal, rather than move just from a steady state A to a steady state B. Policy decisions in education also

have to be informed by new findings concerning *learning* in the new contexts.

Rational analysis thus has to move beyond demography and economics, and enlighten decision-makers on larger social issues. In sum, rational analysis for educational policies has to go *beyond education, beyond the present, and beyond the national border*.

Implications for policy design

There are changed expectations for what concerns policy design. In times of rapid change, the knowledge base for educational policy decisions has to be significantly expanded; accordingly, there has to be significant investment in the research components of education decisions. It will also be necessary to:

- make an integrated effort to analyze various dimensions of reality that are related to education;
- undertake international, collaborative research and create a database on issues sensitive to education policies;
- make such efforts that transcend systems of diverse economic status; and
- fully exploit the World Wide Web (WWW) and the new media in order to inform local policy decisions.

The political dimension

The first and foremost element in the politics of education policies is the expanded notion of '*rights*'. In the dichotomy between *rights and responsibilities*, there is an obvious increase in the emphasis of *rights*, sometimes at the *expense of responsibilities*. The government, and the ministry of education in particular, have become the major agents charged with ensuring that people obtain their *rights*, however

elevated they may be today, although resources are stagnant, if not reduced.

New stakeholders

In a society that is increasingly connected and rapidly changing, there is understandably a greater complexity in the arena of policy development, and education is no exception. There are therefore new *'stakeholders'*, including those who have renewed their participation as well as those who have lost their privileged positions. Amongst other such stakeholders, the business sector, the parents, the students, the teachers/educators and the media, merit some special attention.

The *business sector* has become more active than ever in the area of educational policy. There are several reasons: the dissatisfaction with the products of the education system; direct investment in human resources; and the notion of direct contribution to the community as a sign of 'post-media publicity'. The involvement of the business sector is also enhanced by all kinds of trends of 'privatisation'.

The involvement of *parents* is much greater than it used to be. Contrary to the earlier decades, parents are no longer satisfied with securing a place for their children in the education system. They demand *quality*, which generally means a better future for their children, and they look to the education system for hope.

Students have become conspicuous new actors in the education arena. The traditional 'student political movements' continue, now perhaps with new attention to issues such as globalization, the WTO, the environment, etc. However, students engage in the area more substantially as consumers of learning opportunities. Several elements definitely reinforce the students' status as a consumer.

These include: (i) the increasing need for on-demand and just-in-time learning and training; (ii) the move away from set-menu curricula (at both tertiary and secondary levels) towards individualized learning paths; (iii) the change of funding formula for public education in favour of student choice; and (iv) the general trends of privatization.

The interplay between the *teachers/educators* and the non-education sector is another issue at stake. Traditional views of accountability have identified teachers as professionals *vis-à-vis* the state and the market. However, recent developments in the economy, and the society, have put teachers into rather difficult situations. On the one hand, education as the main engine for learning is regarded as a prime factor in the success of a knowledge-based society. And this is true both at the individual and national levels. On the other hand, teachers largely belong to the public sector that, in most systems, constitutes a social institution, which is yet to catch up with the changed economy and society.

Such a contradiction is also reflected among educators. On the one hand, teachers know students best, and are the best agents to breakthrough the rituals, protocols and bureaucracies developed within the education systems. On the other hand, teachers are so used to what could be known as *'schooling'* and *'teaching'* that they are not prepared to consider alternative, but *more genuine*, modes of learning.[10]

On another front, teachers in general oppose privatization, which is often seen as a source of *fragile* employment situations. Even in

10. In many systems that attempted reforms in education, teachers, who have long been dissatisfied with the education systems, support the reforms in principle. However, when it comes to practical reforms that could help break away from conventional schooling (e.g. integrated curriculum, group learning, authentic assessment), teachers become reluctant and pessimistic. Teachers are too happy to see changes in the education system, but are not always ready to accept changed roles for the teachers.

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systems where the Civil Service has undergone major surgery and are more flexible in nature, teachers in the public sector are still well protected in employment. *This ensures stability of the teaching force but such stability does not necessarily benefit the learners.*

There is often a tension between teachers, who would like to have mild and slow changes, and the non-education sectors, where people would like to see rapid changes in education before further harm is done to the children.

The *media* is another new stakeholder that deserves attention. *"Perception is reality"* is no longer a cynical remark, but a political reality. It is powerful in shaping public opinion and shifting the agenda for public discussions. It can easily establish or ruin the legitimacy of a person or a government. The media creates a discourse that may undermine *rational analysis* and intellectual discussions, yet it is something that all governments have to live with.

However, the media can also be a positive element in society. It is possible for successful governments to harness the energy in the media, fully exploit its power, and make use of it in engaging the public in consensus building and in launching social campaigns.

Implications of globalization

Significant changes have been caused in the area of education policies by globalization. This has at least three implications: internationalization of higher education, uneasy cultural interactions and the *'digital divide'*.

Higher education has become increasingly international because of a number of factors: the off-shore provision of programmes, the development of 'on-line learning', the multi-site production of knowledge commodities, the cross-national

recruitment of students by major international enterprises, etc. These factors have encouraged some conformity of higher education standards in terms of the curriculum, structure, duration, as well as qualification and recognition. Such a trend of internationalization may positively help cross-fertilize strategies and plans of reform, but it may also cause difficulties in establishing strategies that are nation-specific.

Changes in higher education will inevitably affect basic education. In most systems, the curriculum and practice in basic education are still largely dictated by the norms of university entrance.

Internationalization has also caused uneasy cultural interactions. Most of the reforms in education – individualization of student learning, the change of academic assessment, the introduction of social or values education, the change of the role of teachers, the increased significance of group learning, etc. – may constitute challenges to traditional cultures in the home nation.

There is also much discussion about the *'digital divide'* in the international forum. There are claims that developments in technology will further exacerbate the disparity between the *'haves'* and the *'have-nots'*. There are, however, also examples of China and India where technology seems to have opened opportunities of leapfrog developments in the economy.

Riding the tide

In sum, there are major changes in the economy and society. Such changes are not only spectacular in *quantity*, but are also fundamental in *quality*. We are, indeed, witnessing the transition from the industrial era to a knowledge-based era. Most of the changes challenge the *status quo*. Many may cause uneasiness and instability.

However, each of such changes could also be analyzed dialectically and present opportunities as well as threats. In other words, a successful ministry of education could always *exploit the new opportunities, harness the energies in varies parties, mobilize unprecedented resources and launch new initiatives* that were inconceivable before. External changes can always be used as the driving force for internal changes. *If the ministry is not able to 'ride the tide', then it is likely to be constantly under uneasy threat and pressure, and the entire education system may suffer.*

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2. THE DISSOLUTION OF STEERING: HIGHER EDUCATION POLICIES IN EASTERN EUROPE

by Voldemar Tomusk

While weakening of the political sphere is common to the modern world, there are specific reasons why public policy development has not been particularly successful in Eastern Europe over the past decade. I wish to underline some of these reasons, and present a few examples of higher educational policy formulation, or the lack of it, in the post-state socialist transition economies.

Ten years after the *revolutions*, we still find that very few informed public debates are held on substantial issues of educational policy. It might even be fair to say that we see very little substantial debate on any public policy issue. The dominant pattern of political practice seems to be that elections do not give political mandate to forces presenting well-argued and realistic political programmes even in those rare cases when such are present. The main problem here is that successful post-state socialist reforms bear a significant social cost and, therefore, do not generate much of political legitimacy for its initiators.

Therefore, it is often the case that those who rally behind radical nationalist agenda or utopian 'great-leap-forward' type of economic programmes reap political popularity. Quite often, it is not the content of the programme that brings success but the personality of its proponent. This is, however, not such a unique phenomenon in world politics. Nonetheless, it becomes an issue when it becomes the leading or the only selection criterion. It has also been recently argued that in Eastern Europe the notion of liberal democracy has been broken (Abraham, 2001). While the largest majority of the countries have introduced some type of participatory democracy, the

governments they produce remain often utterly illiberal (Zakaria, 1997).

When access to power prevails over political programmes, strange coalitions can be established. For example, social democrats can rule together with libertarian free-marketeers. Such a coalition is only possible when both partners remain indifferent about their guiding ideologies and programme goals. Having gained political power, such a mixed coalition usually works for a minimal success: *survival.* Securing the latter, however, is already a big task for technocrats who daily develop and carry out *micro-policies* from within the executive branches of governments.

Weakening of the political sphere

Many commentators, particularly those who are taking a critical stand against globalization, like Zygmunt Bauman (1999) have been complaining about the weakening of the political sphere. Others, like Robert Putnam (2000) have diagnosed the breakdown of traditional social bonds as one of the main ills of contemporary society. The explanation is found in the shift of power from the political to the economic sphere. It is argued that power, which is increasingly global, has its base in multinational companies and that this makes the political sphere, which normally operates within the limits of a nation-state, largely irrelevant. The traditional political sphere, constructed in the modern world within the limits of a nation-state and around citizenship, has very limited means to influence the global economic sphere that nowadays increasingly monopolizes world power. There are certainly other views, and eventually other ways may emerge for political will to express itself. Some for example, dream of globally wired internet-based democracy. But for the time being this, in a nutshell, is what critical social commentators tell us is happening.

Another force eroding political will in western democracies is consumerism. Identity, one may argue, is moving from what people believe in to what they consume. Consumerism, as a world religion established by developed economies after the Second World War, has the potential, probably for the first time in the history of mankind, of bringing together a large part of the world population in order to worship a deity perceivable by almost everybody: money and what it can buy. Making profits together is the goal that many expect will render traditional ethnic, cultural and religious differences irrelevant. Again, not everybody shares this view. Some may still believe that humanity may have more important purposes than just maximizing profits. Others say that profits are always made at somebody's cost and that the slaves of the developing world pay for welfare costs of Western civilisation (Bales, 1999).

In Eastern Europe, the political energies that were released into the *velvet revolutions* have not led to the creation of a dynamic, productive political life. Although political apathy may look somewhat similar to that of Western liberal democracies, its causes are most probably different. *Firstly,* popular revolutions were shortly followed by political fatigue. *Secondly,* the economic returns of East European capitalist revolutions have remained, even in the most successful countries, limited. Many countries have not yet achieved the pre-1989 GDP levels, and that, in the context of growing social and economic inequalities. In Eastern Europe, there are now countries where significant segments of the population live in conditions comparable to those of the poorest countries of the world. *Thirdly,* one could also mention a deep-rooted scepticism on what a change in one's participation in the political process would make. As Slavoj Zizek (2001) from Slovenia has recently argued, one of the actual goals of the Communist system was to cultivate cynics who took nothing seriously. He argues that, at least in this respect, the objective of the communist regimes was widely achieved.

East European post-state socialist governments are in a rather difficult position. Following the high expectations of 1989, it is difficult to explain the reasons for poverty and why improvement in living standards would take another quarter of a century or more. Many countries are looking for possible external sources that would, with their massive investments, pave the road to economic changes and welfare society. For many, the possibility of joining the *European Union* is seen as a way to stop the economic downturn that has lasted for more than a decade. What they face, however, is most probably another vicious circle - to achieve membership massive changes would be needed, but without membership, there are no economic means and political capital to facilitate the necessary reforms.

It is the same dilemma that Einhorn (2001) describes in the case of the *World Bank*: *"To argue that developing countries need market-friendly policies, stable macroeconomic environments, strong investments in human capital, an independent judiciary, open and transparent capital markets, and equity-based corporate structures with attention to modern shareholders values is to say that you will be developed when you are developed"*. To gain access to resources that would enable a country to break the vicious circle of poverty and underdevelopment it has to demonstrate having in place structures and procedures characteristic to developed countries. In such a case it is for no wonder that official reports not always reflect the reality but instead that provide the *'right answers'* an agency from North or West expects to receive (Tomusk, 2001b).

Still, many countries are trying to do their best to convince the European Commission and other possible donors that they more or less comply with the *Commission's standards*, with the expectation that this could break the circle and facilitate access to their resources. This may or may not be true. However, what it certainly does, is that it moves the whole policy debate beyond the borders of the nation-

states. The assumption that there is, more or less, a complete list of requirements that a *normal* country (liberal, democratic, market capitalist) should meet renders much of the local policy discussions redundant. All a nation is expected to do is to follow those who have already achieved higher levels of welfare or just comply with requirements of international financial institutions. If such a position is combined with a traditional state-socialist dependence on centralized power, the only solution a government may find is hiring technocrats in order to copy practices that have brought success to somebody else in another place and in a different time.

The dissolution of steering

Before moving to particular examples, a few words should be said about changes in the East European higher education system since the 1989-1991 Revolutions. It is a rather well known fact that socialist/communist countries in Eastern Europe, with possibly one or two exceptions, had developed education systems that offered universal comprehensive education and had in its time well-developed systems of vocational training, and higher education. They offered high quality training, in particular in the fields of natural sciences and engineering, to an impressive number of students.

During the 1990s, we became aware of the gap between the development of centrally planned economies and their education systems. East European economies are considerably less developed than their respective education systems. In the context of contemporary theories of economics of education, in an East European country access to higher education is close to 30 per cent of the respective age-group whereas *36 per cent of the population, or 52 million people, live below the subsistence level, set at a dollar a day* (Tayler, 2001). This offers a curious counter-example for the connection between economic development and education

proposed by many agencies, including the World Bank (see, for example, World Bank, 2001). It is obvious that under certain conditions even large investments into education may bring little return. Discussing private returns on higher education investments under state-socialism has little meaning.

Although there might have been some private economic benefits, particularly in countries with somewhat developed shadow economies, the very concept of private gain contradicts the fundamental principles of the functioning of state-socialist societies. Rather unexpectedly, it has become evident that economies and societies in general have gained less than expected from developing such large education systems. Some, like the Polish economic shock-therapist Balcerowicz (1995) argue that in the past, what the East European countries produced in the area of higher education did not greatly differ from productions in other sectors of their economies. The results were comparable to the production of television sets that had to be returned directly to the shop for repair, or shoes that wore out in a few days. Balcerowicz names this type of production "*the pure socialist output*" and says that it served the purpose of fulfilling the formal state planning requirements. Its practical use, however, remained limited. Such he argues, was also the case with higher education graduates.

When the state-socialist regimes were overthrown and centrally planned economies collapsed about a decade ago, East European societies suddenly found themselves with higher education systems that the emerging market economies – with all of their difficulties and development problems – were not in a position to sustain. By and large, while the state-socialist societies had administrative means to move disproportionately large resources into education, the new regimes did not have such means; their economies had collapsed and tax regulations – even if those were introduced – were not exactly

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observed. Within a few years, some East European higher education systems lost up to 90 per cent of their previous funding (see, for example, Savchuk et al., 1997).

At the same time, public demand for higher education has grown rapidly. In many East European countries, higher education enrolments have doubled during the 1990s. To a large extent, this can be explained by the extremely insecure job prospects of the population and high unemployment. Higher education is often seen as one of the few available means of access - if not to upward social mobility, than at least - to paid employment.

These problems put the MOEs into a rather difficult situation. They had to manoeuvre between three irreconcilable forces:

(i) the economic realities that set the level to which higher education and its badly needed reform could be financed;
(ii) the general public that demands free access to higher education and

(iii) universities that have significant political power and that fight - often desperately - for their own existence.

Negotiating a compromise between these three forces is hardly possible. Students and families are fighting for nothing less than their existence; universities for their survival; and the economic situation is nothing more than a harsh reality. The result is a lack of policy. Daily compromises are made with whichever party threatens the stability of the governments. The general direction of the policy is, however, missing. It is drifting towards an unknown (or known but unspeakable).

Drucker (1998) describes a similar situation in the Japanese agricultural sector after the Second World War. There too, because the issue was highly sensitive, no policy consensus was possible and the Government resorted to a non-policy policy, similar to that adopted by East European governments in the domain of higher education in the 1990s (Tomusk, 2000). What happened in Japan was that its agriculture disappeared within a few years, thus solving the whole conflict. It may not, however, be a viable solution for East European higher education.

The location of the policy nexus in East European higher education remains somewhat hidden. Technocrats in the ministries of education react to daily political threats the best they can. Policies, to the extent that they exist, are not negotiated between the governments and the society, as the case should be, at least theoretically, in liberal democratic societies. Inputs are made by those who are in a position to contribute additional funds or to boost otherwise governments' political legitimacy.

Complying with 'European policies'

It has been argued for some time, that the power of the nation-state is leaking, maybe fatally so. In Europe – following the European unification process that may eventually lead to establishing a federal structure in a significant part of the continent – some power has been gradually moving to the level of the European Union. These processes that are supposed to bridge the often-opposite political interests are pursued more vigorously in some fields like agriculture than, for example, education or others. East European post-state socialist governments seem to attribute a stronger role to the supranational European institutions than they actually have. Although the EU, following the subsidiary principle, cannot have a common educational policy, many of the East European nations express their

readiness to comply with such a policy. Part of that has to do with the lack of information. Another part, however, is related to the difficulties in developing, implementing, and most importantly, funding relevant local educational policies. For many East European countries, it would be a *great relief* if the EU had a common educational policy and if it could *fund it*.

Recently, the need to establish greater compatibility between the higher education systems in Europe has been widely recognized. The difficulties that such a task eventually presents are obvious. *Firstly*, at least formally, there is no agent to carry out such a policy Europe-wide. *Secondly*, traditions and status attached to particular types of institutions vary largely and are not easily overcome by decrees or agreements. One may, for example, think of what it would take to establish a formal equivalence between the German *'Fachhochschule'* and the French *'Grande École'*. The Bologna Declaration is actually aiming at considerably less: introducing an undergraduate (3-4 years) degree by the year 2010. Still, some of the leading higher education experts, from Germany for instance, find it a rather challenging task.

The perspective of East European countries seems to be somewhat different, and perhaps more positive. In one of these countries, with which I have had more contacts, the Ministry of Education recently declared that the higher education system of that country would introduce the necessary changes by 2003 (EV, 2001). Here, we have probably two alternative ways of interpreting such a statement. *Either* the higher education system of this country does not have too many traditions and established structures *or* political opportunism has become a substitute for a policy. Although such a reform is expected to require sacrificing a key element of the post-state socialist reforms – in this case, the entire Vocational Higher Education sub-sector (which itself represents a gross

misinterpretation of the Bologna Declaration) – the Government is determined to implement the policy it perceives as required by the supranational power. East European governments, at least verbally, commit to comply very quickly with external requirements; unfortunately even regarding issues where no compliance is needed or expected.

Dealing with global financial institutions

In one East European country, an international funding agency has, over the past five years, made significant efforts to negotiate a large-scale loan project. It was thought that this would help to improve the management of the higher education system and institutions, and increase the efficiency of the system by rationalizing the structures and merging institutions. After five years, the results are clearly less than what Cherych and Sabatier (1986) once called *mixed*. Foreign experts contracted by the institutions concerned have *engaged in hundreds of days of rather expensive fieldwork – learning about the Ministry of Education* as well as the universities, their structures, processes, resources, etc. and negotiating details of the project. Only limited funds have been released for the purposes of training and study visits to locals. The bulk of the loan is today as far from release as ever. According to a former expert involved in the project, certain elements of the formally agreed-upon project are actually being opposed by many of the universities themselves (Morgan, Bergerson, 2000).

Although the Government, the funding agency, representatives of higher education and all others concerned agreed, the project did not move. There seemed to be too many administrative and purely managerial problems related to project implementation, creating an infinite sequence of small but unpleasant hurdles. At one point, however, when things happened to move reasonably well, the project

team was suddenly no longer politically supported. The management team was re-organized and the whole group of external consultants replaced. The first visit of the new team was subsequently delayed several times by more than six months. A new British Consultant to the project remarked in private: *"You cannot help a university, which does not need your help".*

What seems to be a particular problem with this project is that while the system as well as the universities badly need the loan, the universities were clearly opposed to the goals of the project. They had no chance to negotiate and the implementation of the project meant closing positions without receiving any additional benefits. The loan would enable the Government to eventually save public funds and that is quite obviously a good idea. However, the project that the Government and the funding agency have developed for themselves does not take into consideration the interests of the universities. The capacities of academics to block unpopular reforms have been in this case, and in the case of many similar international projects, underestimated. One may suggest that it is not the ruling politicians that on their own initiative reversed the project, as the agency involved seems to be implying (World Bank, 2001), but that they have done it under the influence of powerful electoral groups – university faculty, students and their families. It is perhaps somewhat unfortunate that a major international organization has difficulties understanding the basic principles of functioning of a democratic state and taking them into consideration while developing its own operational procedures.

Another, even more striking example, comes from the history of the TACIS Programme of the European Union under which, during the period 1993-1999, 32.5 million euros were spent in the former Soviet Union countries for the improvement of university management. Despite all the money invested, we still do not have

access to studies that could inform us about the internal functioning and decision-making processes of these universities. There are certainly important groups in those universities that benefit from not having those studies conducted. At the same time, however, these programmes are structured in such a way that they leave us with the impression that their primary purpose is not so much to help the recipients of the aid but the experts and computer manufacturers of the donor countries themselves (Tomusk, 2001a).

Introducing tuition fees: the policy gap

The introduction of tuition fees has been a major policy issue for many East European countries for some years. While governments openly admit that the public budget cannot afford complete funding of mass higher education systems, Higher Education Acts in many countries, and the constitutional law in some others, stipulate that higher education is to be provided free-of-charge. This principle has been maintained as a cornerstone of the policy, but it is completely unrealistic, given the current levels of economic development.

At this point, one would estimate that at least one third of East European higher education students pays a tuition fee and this proportion is rapidly growing. However, according to the legislation in many countries, this rather large contribution, that is supposed to be made by the students, does not exist formally. Significant irregularities occur in the handling of these funds. Actually, there is no stipulated way to manage this money. In some cases, a part of the money is spent on purchasing information technologies and paying for infrastructure. In others, the whole sum is distributed between the faculty members. The harsh fact is that, even in some very large higher education systems in Eastern Europe, the tuition fees collected from one third of the student body cover 80 per cent of the total

funding of the sector. This money is neither counted nor controlled systematically. In many cases, there are no formal traces.

Minimized capacity to implement policies

The capacity to implement policies, and the actual implementation practices, constitute another sensitive issue in East European higher education, particularly when the policy goals lack public support. In addition to the resistance of significant interest groups to the implementation of imported policies (for example, those leading to rationalizing the institutional landscapes and structures), one should also pay attention to the management capacities of the MOEs themselves. They seem to be positioned in the middle of yet another conflict. On the one hand, the post-state socialist economies clearly support the idea of downsizing government agencies and reducing expenditures on state governance. On the other hand, the state is still attached to the idea of a centralized control over many aspects of higher education – conferring higher degrees, defining the content of higher education studies (often in the form of developing a national curricula) checking the fulfilment of these by the universities, etc. Although such practices sometimes find a justification in continental European traditions, downsized governments usually lack the means to carry out such functions effectively.

Ironically, the actual result of centralization practices is not over-management of the system but its opposite. Despite formal centralization of many functions, actual co-ordination between various sectors of higher education systems is often lacking. One possible solution here would be further decentralization of various functions, particularly in favour of discipline-based academic and professional groups. Unfortunately, such attempts are often opposed by the academic community, which feels that this would further threaten its position. There are clearly significant groups in East

European higher education which, given the circumstances, hold the view that anonymity of policy- and decision-making is the best of the options available; for none of them looks really attractive.

Conclusion

The above exemplifies some major difficulties in developing and negotiating higher education policies in Eastern Europe. The problem is that in many cases realistic policies would be highly unpopular, particularly for the people who are still waiting for the material benefits of capitalism. The non-policy policy that many of the countries seem to have adopted (Tomusk, 2000) still means a change – more often than not – towards lesser transparency of the procedures and confusion in the decision-making process.

A decade after the *'revolutions'*, one of the main problems that Eastern Europe is facing is the weakness of participatory politics. Political parties have not been able to develop distinct policy programmes, particularly in sensitive areas like education, which for the largest segment of post-socialist societies implies a better future, if not for themselves then at least for their children. Although it may look extremely naïve at a time when governments, implicitly or explicitly, recognize that the internal potential for positive reforms has been exhausted – and that the only thing that can help is massive external support – I would still argue that without filling the 1989 idea of political plurality with practical meaning, East European democracies will not develop much further.

From this perspective, the issue of particular structures of the ministries of education is less important than the work which (the rather new) political parties should do for developing their policy agenda and discussing those with the public. I see the main threat to this coming from the 'technocracy' that rules over a large part of the recent modern world and which assumes precisely that it is possible

to have a single-perfect policy that is good for everybody. If this were the case, the system changes that have occurred in Eastern Europe would be meaningless. Deciding on the single-perfect-policy was exactly the task once handed to Central Planning Committees.

Another quite unfortunate fact is that while ministries have been reduced, the governments are still trying to centralize many of the functions that could be more efficiently controlled directly by the institutions themselves or by professional groups related to them. These days, significant numbers of external experts are coming to Eastern Europe with ready-made solutions and policies. Relatively little attention has been paid, however, to raising the local capacity to design, analyze, estimate costs and discuss policies. This evokes in my mind a Chinese proverb about the *difference between giving somebody a fish and teaching him to fish.*

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PART IV
DO INTERNAL STRUCTURES MATTER: STEERING FROM WITHIN?

1. HOW MINISTRY ORGANIZATION IMPACTS EDUCATIONAL POLICY DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

by Mahieddine Saïdi

To discuss how differences in organizational patterns affect educational policy, an attempt will be made in this paper to outline some of the *relations and interactions that exist between the organizational patterns of Ministries of Education and the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of educational policy, design and implementation*. A particular attention will be granted to the question of strengthening the *implementation and management capacities* of ministries of education.

MOEs' capacities to prepare, implement and evaluate policies

There are, in fact, three aspects that need to be taken into consideration to identify and discuss the above-mentioned relations and interactions. The *first* concerns *the capacity of an MOE to formulate educational policies*. The question that needs to be asked in this case is: *Are there any patterns or specific features that increase the capacity of the ministry to define educational policies?* The *second* concerns *the capacity of a ministry to implement policies*. Implementation transforms policy into action. It determines the extent to which the objectives of the policy will be achieved. In other words, it reflects very largely the capacity of the ministry to efficiently 'manage' the implementation of a policy.

The *third* aspect is *the capacity of a ministry to monitor and evaluate* the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability *of a policy and propose readjustments*. The first two factors - capacity to formulate and capacity to implement - can have separate negative impacts on the outcomes of educational policies. This third factor is, so to say, the *'corrector'* or the *'adjuster'* of the two other sides.

Capacity to formulate policies

Generally, the administrative sector of the Ministry of Education is not responsible for the formulation of educational policies, their options, the political accuracy and timeliness of their priorities, objectives, strategies and plans. It is the *Cabinet* of the *Minister of Education* that shares this responsibility with several other actors. Inside an MOE, the role of the administrative sector is not political, in the strict sense of the term. However, it is crucial because it lays the basic ground for the formulation of *quantitative and qualitative sets of objectives*, for the construction of *policy scenarios*, for the evaluation of their *costs and prioritization*, and for the preparation of *operational action* plans. The administration is not responsible for making the policy decisions, but it *cannot* be bypassed in preparing them. Surely, any policy decision taken by politicians would be very fragile if it were not supported by a strong qualitative preparation by the administration.

The capacity of an MOE's administration to handle such activities is generally well established in most developed countries and advanced developing countries. This is also supported by a wide range of studies, research and information developed through specialized public and private contracting companies and universities. Such development depends on the budget available for these activities over time, which also reflects the importance of the decision preparation phase.

In many developing countries, however, the inside capacity of the Ministry of Education to formulate feasible and affordable policies is weakened by several factors:

- poor quality of available information related to the past performance as well as to the future prospects of the different parts of the education system;

- poor quality of forecasts and lack of commitment of actors regarding the volume and timeliness of resources that can be made available for the funding of the policy;
- inadequate capacity to document and organize dialogue among policy actors regarding policy options in relation to their costs and available resources;
- insufficient number or inadequate recruitment of statisticians and educational planners; etc.

Donors and specialized agencies often provide support in the field of policy formulation. However, the sustainability of such support depends on the building of national capacities through the training of local staff and the development of an educational information system within the MOE. It also depends on the recognition and respect granted by ministers and politicians to the value and the safeguard of such precious national resources. In particular, educational planners and statisticians should be deployed to all sub-sectors of the education system – primary, secondary and higher education – and should contribute to policy formulation at all levels of the MOE – central as well as regional.

Capacity to implement policies

Having *well designed policies* is not enough. Because policy is as implementation does, the capacity of MOEs to implement policies is crucial. What are the internal factors constraining this capacity? Where do the main weaknesses lie? Do they lie in attaining the quantitative objectives or the qualitative ones? Do they lie in school construction and equipment, in school maintenance, in teacher training, in teacher allocation regulations and procedures, in textbook distribution, in teacher supervision and promotion, in budget allocation and expenditure? Are they weaknesses in the performance of functions, in their distribution among structures or

in procedures? How can MOEs identify, reduce and prevent these weaknesses? *How can MOEs be organized in order to increase their capacity of implementation*? Finally, are these questions accorded enough importance at the stage of designing educational policies and their action plans?

Capacity to monitor and evaluate policies

In the absence of adequate monitoring and evaluation capacity, it is rarely possible to establish which part of the success, or the failure, of an educational policy is due to low quality of design and preparation of the policy and which part is due to its poor implementation? The success or the failure of policy components can be more precisely identified and analyzed through monitoring and evaluation of processes. For instance, school-mapping decisions can be better evaluated through analysis of school frequentation over a long period. Quality improvement in education can only be evaluated as a process through specific indicators in a long-term perspective.

Organizational *'pillars'* of ministries of education

In a prospective view, what is very important is not only to have a 'well-designed policy'. The internal abilities to implement it properly, and to monitor and evaluate each of its components for necessary adjustments are as important. Ideally, these abilities should exist within - or be available to - the ministry prior to the implementation period or, at least, be included as priority objectives of the policy itself. In reality, however, these abilities are often still insufficient, particularly in poor, developing countries, and are related to the *strengths* and *weaknesses* of the organization of ministries of education and *four organizational 'pillars'*: (i) a coherent and well -co-ordinated overall organizational pattern (ii) an efficient information system

(iii) accurate and consistent 'Rules, Regulations and Procedures' (RR&Ps) and (iv) availability, reward and motivation of skilled staff.[11]

Reinforcing the 'pillars': lessons learned from experience

Functions in an MOE are of three kinds. The *first* is the 'pedagogical' function. It is specific to education and constitutes its 'hard core'. It comprises curriculum, teacher training, textbooks and supervision. The *second* is the 'strategic' function. It prepares strategic decisions and comprises planning, programming and budgeting. The *third* deals with day-to-day administration of educational activities and is termed the 'operational' function. The second and the third functions are 'generic' functions and are common to all ministries.

The organizational pattern translates the delineation of mandates and responsibilities related to the functions of an MOE and their distribution among structures at central, regional and school levels. It includes specification of posts within structures and their job descriptions.

Efficiency of organizational patterns depends, among other factors, on their fit with the actual scope of the MOE, the strength of co-ordination, and the level of de-concentration. The scope of MOEs often varies from one country to another and within the same country as well. Very often, newly created ministries, for instance, ministries in charge of higher education, or technical and vocational education do not develop their own planning tools and structures and have little means. They rely on the Directorate responsible for educational planning and statistics of the 'main' or initial ministry, with no

11. The identification and analysis of such components are facilitated by a tool known as the 'functional analysis tool'. See Sack, R.; Saïdi, M. 1997. *Functional analysis (management audits) of the organization of ministries of education*. Fundamentals of Educational Planning, 54. Paris: IIEP/UNESCO.

contractual or budgetary arrangements for such services. Consequently, the available capacity of policy formulation and policy dialogue for the sub-sectors becomes even weaker. Under these conditions, steering from above becomes the only way of monitoring and designing. The same holds for the implementation and evaluation stages of the policy. The case was observed in Chad and Congo. When the private education sector is important, as in Haiti or Lebanon, it is most important that the education planning function should be comprehensive.

A different aspect concerning the issue of overall organization lies in the conflict of 'leadership' among different structures. It may happen that the Directorates responsible for planning, project implementation, and the sub-sector Directorates come into conflict. The latter often consider that they are the ones who do the operational planning - which is true in most of the cases. Moreover, the project implementation units often think that they have nothing to do with the planning units, since they have a direct relation with donors and feel that they manage the real development of the sector. This may isolate the planning unit and unfortunately reduce its impact on policy implementation and monitoring. The Minister, through his/her capacity of co-ordination and leadership, can provide the regulator in such cases. Although co-ordination should constitute a major function, in practice it is not devoted enough time. MOEs spend much time instead on a great number of micro-decisions.

Distribution of functions among structures: between specialization and responsibility.

Pedagogical functions *are related to the specific 'technology' of education.*

- Most educational reforms introduce major changes in one or more of these functions, their *qualitative* or *quantitative* objectives,

their *content*, and their *relation* to the learning process. They are politically sensitive, because they refer to national values and support national cultures through the promotion of local, learning languages. At the same time, they need to integrate universal values, scientific and technological progress, foreign languages and human development history. They incorporate quality and equity issues of education. *How are these functions institutionally distributed among structures? How do they manage their interrelations? How do they vehicle reforms? How do they impact on the learning process in the classroom?*

- Several patterns of organization are being used in different countries: We may find a *national institute of pedagogy* - with a special status - responsible for curriculum and educational research, and sometimes for textbooks and design or procurement of learning materials (Benin; Mali). The issue of examinations is very often isolated and safeguarded for the sake of security and confidentiality. Inspection and supervision are mostly de-concentrated to the regions and districts. Teacher training - depending on the existence of training plans and budget and on the flow or the freeze of teacher recruitment - is distributed among teacher-training institutes for primary teachers and training institutes for inspectors and secondary education which depend on the ministries of higher education.

- We also find another pattern whereby *pedagogical functions* are spread across a large number of central Directorates. A real advantage of this is that each function is, or can be, developed in detail. The disadvantage is that it becomes more difficult to maintain the coherence among the functions. Conflicts of competence and lack of co-ordination among the central Directorates concerned may create confusion at regional and district levels for the

implementation of reforms. Organizational audits have identified variations of similar cases. In Palestine, following the recommendation of the audit that was conducted, the MOE recently decided to create a co-ordination level for pedagogical functions at the centre. Benin and Chad have reallocated pedagogical responsibilities to the sub-sectoral Directorates, with the possibility for them to sub-contract specialized pedagogical resource institutions (against budget funds) for the implementation of activities for which they have themselves designed the plans.

- Ethiopia provides yet another example of decentralized education system whereby the Regions (composed of three levels: Regional offices, Zones and Weredas) ensure their own management of the pedagogical functions. At the centre, the national curriculum institute provides technical guidance and support to the regions in their functions and continues to manage a national curriculum for the upper secondary level.

- The case of *technical and vocational education* is specific. It is most of the time organized in one direction and functions like *'a reduced ministry'*, ensuring pedagogical, planning as well as management functions, with often relatively little means. The disadvantage of this is that, compared to general education, insufficient attention is given to the development of this sub-sector and to its articulations with secondary and higher education on one hand, and the labour market on the other.

A close analysis of the *pedagogical functions* shows that the co-ordination of the various sub-functions and the responsibility of the sub-sectoral Directorates are crucial. The role of technical institutes is to develop expertise through research and evaluation and provide contractual and remunerated support to managing structures that remain responsible for their plans.

Ensuring effective policy preparation and meeting the challenge of decentralization

Policy preparation and strategic monitoring by the central level administration is facilitated by devolution of day-to-day *management* tasks, particularly the management of human resources and of the recurrent budget activities, to lower levels. However, organizational audits have shown in many cases (in Benin, Chad, Haiti, Mali, Palestine) that a large proportion of micro decisions that could 'normally' be taken at school level, are taken at district or regional levels. Also, decisions that could be taken at the intermediate, district or regional levels are, largely, centralized either at the ministerial level or at upper governmental levels.

This is generally due to the legacy and culture of centralized management and the lack of confidence in the lower levels. In order to change management, one needs to address two factors: (i) modification of the rules, regulations and procedures in favour of delegation of responsibilities to lower levels as well as development of ex-post control, and (ii) reduction of corruption and increase of confidence in Civil Servants. This issue and the processes concerned are not specific to the education sector. They are more related to good governance and administrative reform. However, since the education sector is often composed of almost half of the total members of the Civil Service, it is well placed for being given a pilot role.

Very few MOEs in poor developing countries have established truly *decentralized management patterns*. For a variety of reasons, staffing is concentrated at the central level and regional and local levels are under staffed both from a *qualitative* and a *quantitative* point of view. Moreover, unfavourable socio-economic factors and lack of infrastructures often discourage staff from applying for jobs in remote locations. Generally, reward and motivation systems are

not sufficient to address such problems. The purchasing power of salaries is getting lower and second jobs are being openly practised and tolerated in many 'poor' countries. Sometimes, corruption practices develop within the system. For example, teachers request payment from parents for *'additional private courses'* given within the teaching hours. Education reforms generally try to rationalise the utilization of teachers, but 'solutions', such as reducing the number of teachers, increasing their load, reducing salaries or increasing mandatory assignment in remote locations, are socially unpopular and politically difficult to implement. *New or revised human resource policies are needed to address these challenges.*

Policy implementation: between reform and routine

An educational policy or reform is generally implemented through a set of programmes or projects, but also through routine management. *How do the project units and routine management structures articulate their responsibilities and actions?*

Projects and project units: In many cases, programmes or projects are implemented from the centre through project units that are generally created and located in the structure responsible for the technical implementation of the project (teacher training, curriculum development, school construction, etc). However, the financial management of projects is generally centralized in a special Directorate or Division in charge of education projects, or in the Finance Department. Efficiency of the implementation of projects depends largely on the mutual collaboration among these structures and their ability to understand and face each other's difficulties.

We all know the innumerable problems that may occur during implementation of projects, be it on the technical side or on the financial. Contractors may not deliver on time, or may provide services of low quality, or disappear completely, and the selection of

new contractors may need to be accelerated. The staff can be easily suspected or accused of corruption and may need to protect themselves. Thus, they may practice a *zero risk working process*. Under such circumstances – increased by bureaucratic tendencies – projects do take a long time to be implemented. This finally increases costs considerably and no one feels responsible for that.

Paradoxically, for a variety of reasons, the staff members in charge of financial management have a narrow margin of manoeuvre to address the risks of project management. Clarifying the respective responsibilities of the structures responsible for projects implementation, building their solidarity through incentives and rewards indexed to the rate of implementation, promoting project management training in technical structures as well as in financial structures and giving the staff enough protection and confidence against ex-post control, can certainly improve the national project implementation rates. De-concentration of project execution is also another issue of importance.

Projects and funding sources: It has been largely repeated over the past ten years that in addition to constraints imposed by national regulations, an MOE's internal organization suffers from a wide range of spread calendars, procedures and reporting requirements related to donor funding. Much progress is being achieved in certain countries such as Ethiopia, where the ten year Education Sector Development Programme represents a joint donor-supported programme covering three stages: *design, implementation* and *monitoring and evaluation*, with decentralized implementation at the regional level.

Co-ordination of separately funded projects: Unfortunately, in many countries, co-ordination of separately funded and implemented projects involves difficulties that result in gaps and non-funded

activities as well as overlaps. This greatly hinders the coherence and timely implementation of reforms as well as their success.

Reform and 'routine' structures: There is ample evidence that the more 'routine' structures (and concerned staff) are involved in the formulation and implementation of reforms, the better it is. They are the real implementers and it is obvious that they should understand and support the reforms. Gaining their confidence is essential to their real implication. It also permits the ministry to appreciate the need for training and continued motivation of the staff in the process of reforms. One of the most important stages of reforms prior to their implementation relates to the process of internalization and self-appropriation of the objectives of such reforms by the concerned staff. No policy for human resource rationalization can receive support from inside if the staff members are not fully convinced of, and are reluctant to share, the overall objectives of policy reforms. Reforms that are prepared in small groups, and not made open to discussions before decision, very seldom succeed.

Information systems and decision-making in education sectors

Educational policy design and implementation is largely related to the availability and the quality of Education Management Information System (EMIS). In practice however, we often find EMIS limited to educational statistics and mainly concerning primary and general secondary education. Certain statistical information, although essential, is sometimes delivered with nearly two years delay! Although this could be acceptable for long-term policy formulation and analysis, it is unacceptable for short-term educational management.

Often, each structure or office develops *specific information mechanisms and flows* for its own use and they sometimes conflict

with those developed by others. Databases developed for personnel administration and management are seldom usable for the pedagogical and administrative management of teachers, although they represent as much as 80 per cent of the education personnel. Information related to recurrent budget preparation and execution is rarely relevant for the management of qualitative educational inputs, or for the maintenance of schools. Information related to project management often reports on the financial aspects of implementation only. This may be a good indicator of the level of investment implementation (and may reveal as well the capacity of absorption of the projects) but such information is not sufficient to improve the management of projects.

The quality of educational policy implementation as well as its monitoring and evaluation depend to a large extent on the *availability, relevance and quality* of the information that are needed for decision making at the various stages and sectors of policy implementation. Such information include:

- educational statistics, projections and costs of policy formulation;
- information for management of pedagogical functions;
- information for financial and technical management of projects ;
- information for administration and personnel management; and
- indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

The development/improvement of information sub-systems is of great importance to the decision making processes - together with another pillar, Rules, Regulations and Procedures, which we will discuss in detail below.

Such sub-systems may or may not be computerised, depending on the local contexts in each country. However, even when computerization is not possible, manual information systems can do the job. Too often, however, there is confusion between information

system development and computerization. Computerization as a means of information is worthwhile when possible, but it is not a substitute for information systems development. The latter relies on information needs assessment and analysis for decision-making – in different functions and at different levels of management – and should be ensured by the MOEs.

Cases encountered in ministries of education in Benin, Cambodia, Chad, Congo Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Haiti, Lebanon, Mali and Palestine reveal that the most common existing information concerns school statistics, exam records, personnel administration files and data, budgets and financial data related to projects. Sometimes these exist in the form of computerised databases, but EMIS, in the sense of a comprehensive information system, has been rarely fully developed. (In Ethiopia encouraging attempts to address this challenge are underway).

Although the development of educational information in ministries of education has gained increasing attention and room in educational policy formulation and their action plans over the past decade, the comprehensiveness and sustainability of information systems are crucial elements that still lack sufficient emphasis.

Rules, Regulations and Procedures

The proper functioning of an MOE is contingent on accurate and consistent Rules, Regulations and Procedures (RR&Ps). They define the legal framework and regular processes for decision preparation and decision making in the main functions. For a successful implementation of policies or educational reforms, it is very important that knowledge of RR&Ps is made available to the staff, and that the staff members know them well, and apply them correctly.

Often, RR&Ps are decades old. Sometimes they are inscribed in manuals and sometimes they are not. At times, they may disappear from some offices for years, because a previous chief may have taken them to his/her new post. New regulations are defined but their distribution inside the institution and their general implementation are sometimes not guaranteed because of lack of budget, of paper, or other reasons.

When reforms are decided upon, certain RR&Ps may need to be updated or adapted to the policy changes, or even suppressed. The ability of the staff inside the MOE to scan, initiate and introduce such changes is another important factor. As routine is the mother of bureaucracy, it is difficult to expect bureaucrats to simplify procedures or find reasons, so to say, to kill their jobs.

RR&Ps are crucial to the management of ministries of education. Certain RR&Ps, such as those for Finance, for Personnel, and for Investment, are under the jurisdiction of ministries other than that of education. Such RR&Ps should be kept consistent with the objectives set by the educational policies and reforms and they should be identified as an integral part of the measures that need to be taken to implement the policies and reforms. In the absence of pressure from above, other ministries sometimes argue that, although they acknowledge the necessity, they cannot change procedures for only one ministry. Therefore, education sectors either have to wait for administrative reforms, or provoke them.

RR&Ps often concern routine activities such as personnel administration or organization of examinations as well as non-routine ones such as school mapping, budget preparation, project formulation. Detailed analysis of relations between decision-making, information-need and RR&Ps, in Benin, Chad and Haiti, reveals that each of these have routine and non-routine parts and RR&Ps updating helps to question, and reduce, the inefficient aspects of routine.

Skilled staff

One of the main 'pillars' on which an MOE's capacities rely is human resources. It is useful for our analysis to distinguish two categories of personnel. The major and the largest category is constituted by *pedagogical human resources*: teachers, headmasters, pedagogical advisors or inspectors, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, textbook authors, etc. For the management of this category of key resources, four aspects have proved to be of the utmost importance:

(i) initial qualification and their continuous training;
(ii) efficient utilization of these human resources;
(iii) motivation and rewards offered in accordance with their performance and in particular the evolution of their career; and
(iv) maintenance and improvement of their collective capacity over time, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

In the education sector, these aspects of human resource management are seldom – except perhaps for teacher training – given sufficient attention while determining policy objectives and strategies. The corresponding responsibilities are often not clearly distributed among the MOE structures and not enough importance is given to their strategic monitoring. What institutions could and should do in this area constitutes an important issue for debate.

The second category of personnel of an MOE is represented by the *non-pedagogical staff* or the staff that deals with *'corporate functions'* and non-pedagogical activities such as personnel administration, general administration, finance and budget, planning and programming, project preparation and management, procurement, school construction and maintenance, etc.

A serious issue in ministries of education is the possibility to deploy adequately trained staff, among the two categories of

personnel, to managerial posts of the ministry and ensure the strategic management of the sector. The corporate functions require specific administrative backgrounds and training as well as managerial skills. In many education sectors in developing countries, administrative functions are performed by pedagogical personnel - mainly teachers - and managerial positions are held principally by inspectors; a very scarce resource. We find very few, if any, engineers, architects, economists, or management specialists, simply because for a long time there has been no tradition of recruitment of such professionals by ministries of education. They go to other sectors and especially to the private sector where salaries are higher. The corporate and managerial positions of the MOE are therefore, to a large extent, held by personnel who can be promoted internally, without obtaining the necessary qualifications and training. This reduces the force of the MOE in pedagogical functions. In the long run, such policies lead to inefficient allocation of human resources as well as insufficient effort to build capacity.

Another issue is the allocation of managerial staff to the centre as against the regions. Although much progress has been made over the past 20 years to increase staff capacity at the central level of an MOE, particularly in planning, it is still insufficient in many countries for other managerial functions. The deficit is particularly noticeable at the regional levels. Among the measures that can help improve the human resource base, the following deserve particular attention:

- Adequacy of staff profiles to the job descriptions for key positions in the administration. This is one of the outcomes of functional analysis in ministries of education. It is possible to increase posts and adequacy of skills through training plans for existing staff, or through redeployment to more adequate positions or other levels of the ministry.

- Increasing the number of staff earmarked for long-term training and their deployment to strategic corporate posts (statistics, planning, school mapping, projects formulation, implementation and evaluation, budgeting processes, monitoring and evaluation, etc. and allocating funds for that in policies and plans;

- Designing policies and plans for adequate staff in managerial functions *in regions and districts* over a period of time and designing mechanisms and facilities for their continuous training and career development;

- Developing new structures for Human Resource Development. In the case of Benin and Haiti, ministries of education have made serious attempts to renovate and modernise the content and status of structures in charge of personnel. From segmented small divisions in charge of personnel administration they have moved towards the establishment of a comprehensive Human Resource Development General Directorate. This Directorate monitors the above-mentioned missions, develops managerial tools and methods, and spells out clearly their responsibilities in the implementation of educational policies and reforms in relation to other strategic structures of the ministry.

Conclusion

Capacities of ministries of education to formulate policies, and evaluate them, depend much on the inside capacity of the administration to collect, analyze and evaluate information related to educational achievements and prospects at the country level, for all sub-sectors - including private education - or to pay for such services and other specific studies that outside contractors such as universities, research centres, private companies, could provide. The development of sustainable educational information systems,

including educational statistics, and the training and recruitment of statisticians, planners and experts in programming and budgeting are critical.

Capacities of ministries of education to implement policies and plans are related to the overall managerial capacity of the MOE at all levels. They are more specifically related to the ministry's capacity to plan, organize, and follow up the execution of the projects and actions that concretise the policies. These three capacities represent a necessary condition for the implementation of policies; although they may not be sufficient for their success.

Capacities of ministries of education depend on their organization, which stands on four 'pillars': (i) organizational framework; (ii) information systems; (iii) Rules, Regulations and Procedures and (iv) staff and skills. Weaknesses of such 'pillars' can be critical. Organizational audits can help scrutinize the strengths and weaknesses in specific situations and for all, or specific functions, of an MOE, depending on the scope of the audit. They can help identify and design action plans for capacity building in the fields where they are required. The design of educational policies and their action plans are increasingly integrating such capacity-building components based on management audits. This trend, manifest over the last 10 years, is growing in ministries of education, and public administration in general.

Much attention was granted to the education sector over the past decades by developing countries. However, the growth of the institutional capacities of their ministries of education did not – *as in developed countries* – follow a sustainable path. Capacities of policy design and policy evaluation are still low, especially in poverty-stricken, centralized developing countries. Capacity of policy implementation often requires additional capacity-building plans and

new policies for the strengthening of managerial, corporate functions, with the support of ministries beyond the MOE.

The development of institutional capacities of the public administration is, in many cases being reviewed and modernized through administrative reforms and rationalization of the Civil Service. The education sector, the most important in size, is also part of the process. Decentralization and de-concentration, sub-contracting, privatization of public services, simplification of rules and procedures, represent a variety of measures that are expected to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration in general and ministries of education in particular.

2. MINISTRY ORGANIZATION AND POLICY FORMULATION: THE CASE OF UGANDA

by Sam Onek

Over the last 10 years, it has become obvious that in a well-organized ministry of education (MOE), the political and technical wings must be significantly complementary. The MOE should *cater* for stakeholders and beneficiaries at all levels, be able to *deliver* quickly, *respond* to changes in human resource demands and *provide* for wide and democratic consultation. For, an efficient organization of an MOE impacts on outcomes of the public policies formulated and the extent to which these policies can be influenced from above, from below, from outside and from within the MOE.

This paper highlights some of the key developments in Uganda in this regard. As I will try to show, in Uganda today, a combination of 'top-down', 'bottom-up', 'external' and 'internal' processes of influence has been established to ensure the efficient functioning of the Ministry of Education and Sports.

The education system before the nineties

As a result of two decades of war and civil strife, the education system in Uganda suffered from years of neglect, *especially at lower levels of the structure*. The *quality* of education was poor; the gross enrolment ratio was only 50 per cent at the primary school level and dropout rates were high (7-8 per cent in lower grades). The attrition rate reached 50 per cent and cohort completion rate was as low as 35 per cent at the primary school level. The socio-political tensions also created dramatic differences in enrolment rates between geographical locations and individual schools, and resulted in an overall system showing very low efficiency in terms of total cost per child.

In addition, parental contributions to school maintenance (including partial support to teachers' salaries) accounted for 50 to 75 per cent of all school financial requirements. Consequently, despite low government tuition fees, and because of Parent/Teacher Association dues, poor parents were very often not able to enrol all (or any) of their children in school. Enrolment rates were also significantly affected by the rigid, formal primary school system, and timetables, that prevented children involved in small trade or household activities from attending school.

This situation had to be addressed by, among other things, putting in place an improved policy framework, policies, management structures and practices. The MOE also had to be re-organized.

Progress and drawbacks in consolidating the framework of policy making

Top-down policy formulation was a common practice for several years in Uganda. The Centre typically comprised of Ministers representing the wider political arena and public servants. As our experience revealed, however, a macro-political framework beyond individual political leadership is very important in ensuring a conducive and supportive environment for the development of education policies and programmes. Such an environment includes:

- freedom of association and self-expression which is a pre-requisite for policy making benefiting from wider views;
- clear national objectives that can inform and guide relevant curriculum development;
- an appropriate economic environment which is critical for human and national development and for modernization; and
- provision of supportive political will.

Specifically in the area of education, the National Constitution (1995) clearly recognizes education as a right of every Ugandan and, while it emphasizes government leadership in providing education it recognizes, with equal strength, the role of other stakeholders.

Government ranks education as a priority sector and backs up its political will with practical and reciprocal financial support. For example, budgetary allocations in support of the education sector have continued to rise, thus increasing from a meagre 14 per cent in the mid-80s to 33 per cent of the Government's total discretionary, recurrent budget in the year 2000.

Today, the political wing of the ministry comprises four ministers: a Minister in overall charge of the Ministry of Education and Sports, a Minister of State in charge of primary education, a Minister of State in charge of higher education and a Minister of State in charge of sports affairs. Most of these Ministers are knowledgeable about education. However, we have learnt over time, that in general, a number of factors can undermine ministers' performances. For instance, constant turnover of Ministers makes continuity of implementation difficult. In the 1980s, we had over six government reshuffles. Added to this, there is the tendency to shift areas of focus or emphasis, creating a discontinuity and disruption; lack of agreed protracted plan for the sector; with every political regime lack of consultation with the technical wing; over-subscription to partisan interests at the expense of the national agenda and conflict between the political and technical wings of the Ministry. We also have to note that inadequate experience; weak managerial skills; poor political relationship and undue involvement or interference in implementation of policies equally affects the performance of Ministers.

The Ministry has developed an Education Strategic Investment Plan. This Plan includes sector priorities and an agreed budgetary framework covering the Medium-Term (the present one runs from 1998 to 2003). The planned activities during this period are broadly protected and are not changed without due consultation with stakeholders, including funding agencies. There is an agreed hierarchy of consultative committees to develop policies and plans. Policy proposals originate in the Departments. These are then passed through the Sector Policy and Management (SPM) Committee comprised of Heads and Deputy Heads of Departments. This Committee serves as a link between Departments to avoid parallel development of policies. Recommendations from SPM are fed into the Education Sector Consultative Committee (ESCC). Representatives of key stakeholders in education, including funding agencies, attend the ESCC meetings. The Committee also serves as a watchdog and moderator for emerging and ongoing issues and activities.

The 'top-level' Policy Forum of the Ministry is represented by the Top Management Committee, which takes binding policy decisions. In some cases, the Top Management Committee seeks Cabinet, or even Parliament approval, of its policy directives. The more efficient Ministers tend to respect and work within the agreed mechanisms of policy-formulation procedures in a democratic manner. They ensure that the central administration gives enough notice to, and communicates effectively with, partners outside the ministry.

Today, to ensure stability, recruitment is carried out on merit basis, after open advertisement. This provides job security to the staff and also ensures stability and continuity even when Ministers change. The public and interest groups sometimes speak out in case of excesses and often receive due attention. However, Ministers can

still pull political strings by referring policy proposals to Cabinet for approval.

Involving donor groups and stakeholders

In the process of policy development, there are many *interest groups* that cannot be ignored. From our experience, these include local authorities, religious organizations, Teacher Associations/ Unions, community leaders, parents, student organizations, employers, donor communities, ethnic and racial occupational groups, women, the private sector, foundations as well as other line ministries.

It is necessary to consult outside *pressure groups* because they often *affect policies* and the *quality* of our programmes in one way or another. They are the *consumers* of our products as well *as implementers* of our programmes. Some *contribute* to the education content and even *provide funds*. The Ministry cannot operate without such support.

In general, the Ministry maintains contacts with external actors by involving them in programme development communication media (including electronic and written media); workshops; meetings and regular bimonthly consultative forums with funding agencies and some key line Ministries.

In principle, external actors must conduct themselves within legal and policy provisions in force at any one time. To achieve this, it has recently been necessary to develop a Code of Conduct and Memorandum of Understanding. It needs to be pointed out, however, that as our experience has shown, there are several factors, which tend to jeopardize a balanced and controlled interaction between the Ministry and external actors. Amongst the more crucial of these, we have to mention rigid bureaucracies and donors' agendas that

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conflict with those of the Government. Often pressure groups *directly or indirectly influence* the system through provision of *grants, loan,* and *facilities with strings attached.* There are also attempts to influence from outside strategies of staffing and management of schools. Yet, another factor that can lead to external over-steering 'concerns inadequate' or 'no consultation' at all within the Ministry itself. The negative consequences of this are paradoxically that implementation of education policies is unduly delayed, generating an overwhelming number of consultations at a stage where a consensual basis for implementation should already be taken for granted.

Decentralization

In Uganda the process of policy development in the Ministry of Education and Sports has, whenever possible, been based on studies as well as consultations with the grass root-level workers and the community. Involvement of those below in producing and implementing policy encourages ownership, ensures sustainability, relevance and also guarantees that those who implement policies are actually *involved in the process of formulating these policies.* The development and implementation of policies in Uganda today is carried out within the legal and policy framework, which recognizes decentralization.

The Government has put in place a decentralization structure giving specific responsibility to different layers in the structure. In addition, primary and secondary educational services have also been decentralized. The Centre and the Districts share responsibilities as follows: National Education Policy development; National Education Plan development; standard and quality control; professional supervision; offering technical advice; (back stopping); monitoring

and evaluation; regulation of private schools; central co-ordination of post-secondary education; and liaison with international agencies.

Under the decentralization framework, the roles of the District include:

- *service delivery* of nursery, primary, secondary, special trade and technical education;
- *deciding local* priorities as well as managing, co-ordinating and supervising NGOs and private education services within the districts;
- *educational planning* at the level of the Council;
- *establishing* an accounting system, including independent internal audits;
- budgeting and education *development* planning assisted by the *Budget Desk* and a *Technical Planning Committee*;
- *maintaining liaison* with *international agencies*;
- *mobilizing* supplementary funding/resources.

At primary school level, the District is also in charge of recruitment of teaching staff; manpower planning and training; school facility planning and development at the district/local Councils; monitoring and mentoring local Councils; and land provision for development projects.

Although decentralized, the Centre continues to honour steering functions through situation analysis, regular consultations, collection and interpretation of data as well as formulation of guidelines.

Uganda had to face many challenges following the ongoing decentralization efforts. Foremost amongst these was the need to enhance the capacity of the Central Government and that of the Local Government and the Districts. At the central level it had to: (i) strengthen the Government's capacity to formulate sector-level

policies and broadly direct financial resources, in response to evolving priorities and needs; (ii) build its capacity to effectively manage and monitor inputs from a range of providers and financiers; and (iii) ensure that the legislative framework reflects the strategic directions and sector reforms envisaged in the Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP).

At the Local and District levels, the Ugandan Ministry of Education had to:

- *build* the capacity of the Districts to effectively and efficiently deliver public educational services, and ensure the quality of privately delivered services in line with national policies and guidelines; and
- *ensure* that local governments, councils and sub-counties contribute to education through apportioning local taxes to education programmes.

Apart from the above, it was also necessary for the Ministry of Education to select adequate models of target formulation, division of labour, management approach, design and implementation, taking into account the actual interest in participation, interest in information and attitudes towards error. The lesson that we have learnt is that consultations and collaboration must be mutual and the roles of various actors must be well defined and acceptable. We also learnt that the need for information sharing is very important.

Efficient internal structures

Organizational design of ministries is indeed, itself, a key factor in deciding policy outcomes. Internal structures serve to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. The structures must avoid duplication and superfluity, provide for 'top-down', 'bottom-up', 'vertical' and

'horizontal' linkages and enable the system to address all key issues, incorporating all members of the Organization.

The macro-structure of the Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda is comprised of the Minister who is the political head and the Permanent Secretary who heads the technical team and is seconded by the Director of Education. Under these two leaders, there are 9 Departments: Pre-primary Education and Primary; Secondary Education; Teacher Education; Higher Education; Special Needs Education, Career Guidance and Counselling, Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training; the Education Planning Department and the Inspectorate, and Administration and Finance.

Each Department is given a mandate to implement its mission. This arrangement permits the pooling together of relevant expertise to carry out the required technical and administrative tasks of the Ministry. In order to encourage horizontal consultation, all senior staff meets, at least once a month in a joint forum, to share policy concerns.

It is to be observed, however, that some key functions that affect the performance of the Ministry are carried out by ministries other than that of education. These include: finance control, which is the mandate of the Ministry of Finance; teacher recruitment which is performed by the Teaching Service Commission and the management of pensions and personnel issues which is looked after by the Ministry of Public Service. Similarly, the Adult Education Programme is under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development; non-formal education is under the Ministry of Gender while curriculum development has been out-sourced to the National Curriculum Development Centre.

To ensure that these other Ministries complement the Ministry of Education and Sports, an Inter-Ministerial Committee provides day-to-day linkages. In addition the Head of Public Service chairs and co-

ordinates 'Inter-Ministerial' Meetings to ensure that programmes are complementary and that there is adequate commitment from all parties concerned.

We also have had a semi-autonomous Project Implementation Unit, which was established to expedite implementation of projects. On and off, consultancy work, research, monitoring and evaluation services are also out-sourced to external experts. The disadvantage of this arrangement is that it undermines capacity building of the mainstream workers, of the Ministry and tends to prevent them from developing a sense of ownership regarding reform programmes.

For what concerns training, the Ugandan Government has recently transferred over 60 training institutions, which were hitherto housed in other Ministries to the Ministry of Education. They include Public, Tertiary, Business, Technical and Vocational Education Institutions. Adequate organizational structures do make a difference. Furthermore, officials in the Ministry of Education can make significant contributions to the policy outcomes. The magnitude of their influence depends on their qualifications, management skills, and knowledge of issues and procedures. It also depends on the opportunities opened by the system for their contribution, operation procedures, legal framework and the existence of concrete operational sector plans. Last but not least, the extent to which officials can contribute to the Ministry basically depends on the nature of political leadership they receive and the work-style of the political leaders.

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 2. PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 20 June 2001

09h00-09h30	Arrival and registration of Participants
09h30-10h00	Opening of the Forum Speaker: Gudmund Hernes, Director, IIEP
10h00-11h00	*Reviewing the organization of ministries of education: Why? How? What?* Speakers: Anton De Grauwe, Gabriele Göttelmann, IIEP
11h00-11h30	Coffee break at the IIEP bar (ground floor)
11h30-13h00	*Political leadership and administration: steering from above?* Chair: Hassan Bin Said, Director, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Malaysia Speaker: Aïcha Bah Diallo, DADGIED, Director, Division of Basic Education, UNESCO Discussant: Henrick Nepper-Christensen, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Denmark
13h00-14h30	Lunch at the IIEP cafeteria (ground floor) Audio-visual presentation on IIEP (optional - Room III)
14h30-16h00	*Do internal structures matter: steering from within?* Chair: Gudridur Sigurdardottir, Secretary General, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Iceland Speaker: Mahieddine Saïdi, International Expert

	Discussants: Sam Onek, Director of Education, Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda Voldemar Tomusk, Senior Programme Manager, Higher Education Support Programme, Open Society Institute, Hungary
16h00-16h30	Coffee break at the IIEP bar
16h30-18h00	*'Bottom-up' policy adjustment and implementation: steering from below?* Chair: Joel Moulen, Academy Inspector, Ministry of Higher Education, Cameroon Speaker: Jose Weinstein Cayuela, Subsecretary of Education, Ministry of Education, Chile Discussant: Inés Aguerrondo, Sociologist, IIEP Buenos Aires
19h30-22h00	Dinner offered by the IIEP

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Thursday, 21 June 2001

09h30-11h00	*Responsiveness to the environment: 'steering from outside'?* Chair: Trond Fevolden, Director General, Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, Norway Speaker: Cheng Kai-Ming, Chair, Professor in Education and Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Hong Kong Discussant: Gabriel Carron, International Expert *(Preparation for Panel Discussion)*
11h30-13h00	*Working groups*
13h00-14h00	Lunch at the IIEP cafeteria
14h00-15h30	*Panel discussion* Chair: Gudmund Hernes, Director, IIEP
15h30-16h00	Coffee break at the IIEP bar
16h00-17h00	*Summary of proceedings: where do we go from here?* Chair: Gudmund Hernes, Director, IIEP

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The book

Does the particular organization of ministries of education actually make any difference with regard to their functioning and effectiveness? Are there organizational structures or mechanisms that are more appropriate than others for promoting efficient management of education as well as policies that are sustainable and more responsive to the environment? Furthermore, how much and what kind of 'steering' – external and internal – should the organization of ministries of education allow or accommodate?

In June 2001, IIEP organized a Policy Forum on the 'Organization of ministries of education' to discuss how differences in organizational structures and mechanisms affect adjustability and effectiveness of educational policies and their implementation process. The Forum also attempted to compare and draw lessons from a selected number of experiences where the absence or presence of sound political leadership and of adequate links with actors and stakeholders at all levels of the system have played a major role in the success or failure of educational reforms.

The discussions were articulated around four 'entry points' into the central theme: 1) *steering from above*: the link between political leadership and administration; 2) *steering from below*: the ministry's interaction with the operational level (schools, teachers, students, etc.); 3) *steering from outside*: the relationship between the ministry and the main stakeholders outside of the system (teachers' unions, parents' associations, mass media, etc.); 4) *steering from within*: the ministry's internal organizational structures and regulating machines.

This book presents the key papers that introduced these four major issues.

Organization of ministries of education

The Forum

The Forum was convened by ***Gudmund Hernes****, Director of IIEP, with the collaboration of* ***Gabriele Göttelmann-Duret****, Programme Specialist, and* ***Estelle Zadra****, Assistant Programme Specialist, IIEP.* ***Yasmin Haq*** *is Resident Fellow at IIEP.*

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